■ Entertainment / A26 ■ Business / B1 ■ World / A10 ■ Sports / A25 ■ Lifestyle / C1

A spark of hope for Pinoy bands

RP expected to benefit from Japan-China row

Kuwait names first woman Cabinet minister

Ginobili stars as Spurs take 2-0 advantage

Israeli martial art Krav Maga to the rescue

'Do not disturb' sign up: Dolphins mating

By Kim Pit
PhilSports Bureau

SAN DIEGO — Guard Mo Ivie's roommate's breeding behavior crapping and shouting at the sight of dolphins and whales. Ivie did it during the Tulane

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Thursday, June 14, 2007 ▲ 36 pages / vol. 20 / no. 196

Mikey goes on leave from House; Iggy bides time

By Michael Lim Ubac, Nikko Dizon and Christine O. Avendaño

REP. JUAN Miguel "Mikey" Arroyo, the eldest son of President Macapagal-Arroyo, yesterday took a leave of absence for an indefinite period, ostensibly to avoid the raging "pantagan" scandal which he said threatened "to bring down" the administration.

What personal deliberation on the pressing "weeks of unmitigated attacks on my person, I have decided to go on a leave of absence as a member of the House of Representatives until my name is cleared of any taint in the 'jueteng' issue," he explained.

The 36-year-old representative of the second district of Pampanga vowed to keep himself out of public sight even as he claimed to have been "falsely and unfairly" accused by jueteng operatives and bagman who said he received payoffs from gambling lords in Luzon.

"To the light, I will step back and personally refrain from issuing any statements and statements on the issues involved, so that I will not be perceived as seeking to influence the proceedings," Arroyo said in a statement.

Negros Occidental Rep. Ignacio "Iggy" Arroyo yesterday said he would consult with his constituents before deciding whether to take a leave of absence from the House, just like his nephew. He stressed that resignation was not an option.

"I have to consult with my constituents first

REP. Juan Miguel Arroyo: "Falsely and unfairly accused." RICO DIAZ

GMA dared: Break your silence on tapes

Is it your voice? Yes or no, opposition asks

By Jaime Laya Jimenez and Philip Tubeza

CALLS have mounted for President Macapagal-Arroyo to publicly declare if it is indeed her voice that is on a supposed tape about alleged fraud in the May 2004 elections, or the issue will remain a ticking bomb for her.

Allies and critics yesterday said Ms Arroyo may have sacrificed a potentially disruptive Independence Day weekend, but they warned that the crisis confronting her administration was far from over.

"It's still chaotic," Liberal Party Rep. Rodolfo Biazon said, referring to the political turmoil created by the allegations that the President had attempted to rig the results of the polls during a supposed phone conversation with Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano, and that her close advisers had taken jueteng bribes.

House Minority Leader Francisco Ferdinand Pangilinan challenged Ms Arroyo.

"I am asking this question directly to the point blank: Are you the voice on the tape? Is it your voice? Answer it yes or no," he said.

Opposition Sen. Panfilo Lacson similarly dared the President. "My advice on her is simple: Just tell the people if she is not the one [talking to Garcillano]."

Lacson said Ms Arroyo's prolonged silence on the issue of the alleged tape was feeding the crisis.

He urged the President and Garcillano to provide samples of their voice print for analysis.

"There may really have been instances [that] the fourth and fifth were many times. Many things remain unexplained," said Lacson, one of the presidential candidates who lost to Ms Arroyo in last year's polls.

The President has not made any unreported statement about the controversial audiotape since Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye, in a statement from which he later backtracked, officially broke the news of its existence nine days ago.

Lacson said the administration and the opposition could agree on a foreign government agency that would authenticate the tape to settle the issue once

AFP ABU CAMP Ringgish shows military intelligence agent Tilgi, Vicki Dobin reunited with his son.

Spy denies being tape source

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan and Arlyn Pepe

AN MILAF intelligence sergeant stepped out of the shadows of Sen. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday and disproved claims by rebel follower Bernard Ong that he was the source of the controversial tape containing an alleged wiretapped conversation of President Macapagal-Arroyo purporting to show she had fixed last year's elections.

Accompanied by a bishop, Tilgi Mdal Eddie of the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (Isafp), was brought to military headquarters at Camp Aguinaldo, where he had reunited with his wife Minnie and their two children, a boy of about 14 and a girl aged 13.

In a television interview on ABC late last night, Eddie said he did not know the contents of the

Ong slips out of seminary

By Leila A. de Perio, TJ Burgonio and Tarra W. Quismundo

THE FORMER deputy director of the National Bureau of Investigation slipped out of his Church sanctuary late last night unaccompanied by bishops in a van with tinted windows, ending a three-day standoff that began after he claimed he had evidence purportedly to show President Macapagal-Arroyo had cheated in last year's elections.

Under cover of darkness, the convoy of vehicles ejected

Taped voices authentic, says Tatad

By Lila B. Salcedo and Tina G. Santos

FILIPINOS has a "strong similarity" to that of President Macapagal-Arroyo, suggesting it is she who is talking to the biggest phone.

And there are also similarities in the voice of the man in the wiretap read of the line with the voice of Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano.

Former Sen. Francisco Tatad said yesterday there were the findings of a US company specializing in voice analysis which, he said, had examined a conference call audio tape supposedly indicating that Ms Arroyo tried to rig the results of the May 2004 elections.

Tatad recognized the findings of the New Jersey-based Voice Identification Inc. (VII) in having

TALE OF THE TAPES

June 6 - To preempt an alleged opposition plot, Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye plays to reporters tapes of supposed superconversations between Ms Arroyo and Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano about an alleged attempt to rig the May election results.

PRESS Secretary Ignacio Bunye

Bunye says the tapes had been doctored. He says the other tape showed that Ms Arroyo was actively talking to a political adviser named "Ben."

June 7 - Opposition lawyer Alan Paguia reveals his own two tapes of supposed conversations involving Ms Arroyo, First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo Garcillano and former Sen. Robert Barbers. Garcillano denies he is the other voice on the tape.

June 9 - Bunye admits committing a faux pas when he initially said that the voice on the recordings was that of the President.

ESTRADA lawyer Alan Paguia

June 10 - Former ABS Deputy Director Samuel Ong presents what he claimed was the "mother of all tapes" that allegedly showed how the President fixed last year's elections. He says the tape is the other "squalid, sordid, explosive" tapes and calls on Ms Arroyo to resign.

Ong seeks refuge at the San Carlos Seminary in Makati.

EX-ABS Deputy Director Samuel Ong

June 13 - Bunye says it is up to Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez to file the necessary charges against Ong for violation of the Anti-Wiretapping law.

LEFT: In the chronology of events on the controversial audio tapes which purportedly contained the wiretapped conversation between President Macapagal-Arroyo and Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano.

LEFT: Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye talks to reporters that the recognition, as part of its identification plan, will release video clips this day or the following day on audio tape of 1 a wiretapped conversation between Ms Arroyo and an unnamed election official in which the two allegedly talked about rigging the coming in the 2004 presidential election.

Bunye says the opposition would claim the audio tapes came from US government sources in order to appear that Washington was involved in a plot to oust Ms Arroyo.

In his View from the Palace page in http://www.news.ops.gov.ph/july/june06... 2006 June, Bunye said a senior US Embassy official had told him of rumors about a month earlier regarding the taped conversation but that he thought those had died down.

"Obviously, the news story about election fraud is a pure contention," Bunye says.

June 6, Bunye plays to Palace reporters two CDs, according to him, one CD allegedly contained a wiretapped cell phone call, and the other CD contained snippets of the call purportedly spliced with the voice of Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano to make it appear he was being instructed by the former to rig the election. Bunye expresses outrage over what he says was the illegal wiretapping of Ms Arroyo's phone.

Bunye says he received both CDs in a sealed brown envelope shortly before the press briefing. He says he decided to allow members of the Malacañang Press Corps to listen to the CDs after radio station dzMM aired the "doctored" version. "I take full responsibility for my action, and I don't regret making this decision because at that time, some response was called for after another action aired the second tape," Bunye says.

June 7, in a radio interview, Alan

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

TUESDAY, JUNE 14, 2005

Second FRONTPAGE

WEATHER FORECAST

Garcillano appointment hangs

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.
and Juliet Labog-Javellana

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo is undecided about re-appointing Virgilio Garcillano to the Commission on Elections. Garcillano has denied being the "Garci" in the controversial wiretapped phone conversation allegedly with the President that surfaced last week.

"I have not received guidance [on Garcillano's reappointment," Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said in an interview yesterday over radio station dzMM.

Bunye said Garcillano's reappointment was solely the prerogative of the President. "I will announce her decision once she makes up her mind on this," he said.

Congress has adjourned without acting on Garcillano's appointment, which would have given him a fixed term in office.

His reappointment has become a question mark after he was tagged as the "Garci" in the wiretapped conversation, where he and the President allegedly discussed the conduct and results of last year's elections.

The President's bypassed nominees are assumed to appointees' status there is a big issue or controversy blocking their appointment.

GARCILLANO

Garcillano and Manuel Barcelona were appointed to the Comelec by President Arroyo on Feb. 18, 2005, as replacements for Commissioners Luzviminda Tancangco and Ralph Lantion, both appointees of deposed President Joseph Estrada.

Sen. Aquilino Pimentel had said the wiretapped conversation confirmed earlier speculation that Garcillano was nominated to the election body "to carry out special operations for the President."

Garcillano was the Comelec director for Region 3A in 1998 when Ortanez lost in his bid for the Senate due to, the latter claimed, "dagdag-bawas" (vote-padding and cheating).

For his part, Sen. Panfilo Lacson said, "It's worth watching [if Garcillano will be re-appointed]."

Lacson said Garci Ebrio was now "out of the Comelec" because he was bypassed by the Commission on Appointments, the powerful body composed of senators and congressmen.

Lacson, a CA member, said Garcillano was not like a Cabinet member who was deemed "acting" or "assistant" if not given appointment" when not confirmed by the CA before the adjournment of Congress.

"He has to be re-appointed, otherwise, he is practically out of the Comelec," Lacson said.

Lacson said it would be interesting to find out what the President would do in the case of Garcillano.

Lacson said if Ms. Arroyo reappoints Garcillano, it would mean that she was afraid of him. If she does not reappoint him, it would still be bad because that would indicate she panicky," he said.

Sen. Richard Gordon agreed that Garcillano presented a problem to the President.

"I don't think he would be reappointed, if I were Garcillano, I would not accept until wiretapping issue because he is such a controversial figure," Gordon said.

Gordon said not seeking reappointment should not mean that Garcillano was admitting guilt.

Asked what Garcillano could do, Gordon said: "He might consider [a job] at PLDT [the phone company]."

Lacson claimed Garcillano was looking at a tenure in a Southern Tagalog province. He did not elaborate.

Militants looking for Loren

By Blanche S. Rivera

BYE BYE to Loren!

Militants yesterday rallied on labor center and losing vice presidential candidate Loren Legarda to resign and join the fight against the government amid allegations that President Macapagal-Arroyo had cheated in last year's elections.

The labor-left group Sanlakbayan said Legarda was a "legitimate political stakeholder" in the antigovernment protests facing the national leadership because of her pending election protest in the Presidential Electoral Tribunal against Vice President Noli de Castro.

"We will patiently wait for Ms Legarda [to] see urge her to immediately break her alliance and join us the fight in the name of truth, justice and good governance," Sanlakbayan chair Fernando Hicap said in a statement.

"We hope the good senator will rise above the tension and take the streets in it... but fight to uphold the real verdict of the people in the May 2004 national elections," Hicap said.

The militants said they would try to invite Legarda to be part of their protest actions because her presence was "necessary" to boost the opposition cause against Arroyo and De Castro.

Hicap said De Castro was only supporting the President because he was aware that the people did not look on him as a worthy successor.

"He is now grasping because he lost many hits to succeed illegitimate President Arroyo in case the latter resigned to answer from power," he said.

Militant groups insist that a united or transition government composed of "respectable members of the opposition, representatives of cause-oriented groups and patriotic forces" should take over if the President is ousted.

"The practice of constitutional succession is already a thing of the past and is will not work this time because the people deserve a better alternative rather than a simple change of the guard through constitutional succession," Bayan Muna said.

CAPTAINS Reinhart Dagbaoy, Peter Navarro and Philip Esmeralda (from left) salute after being handed light sentences for violating Article of War 97.

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Officers who revealed spy plan sentenced

By Doris Paz Bugat

THREE Army captains who had accused Malacañang of ordering them to spy on President Macapagal-Arroyo's rivals in the May 2004 elections were handed light sentences by a court-martial yesterday.

Capts. Peter Navarro, leader of the group Kawal Pilipinas, and fellow Captains Philip Esmeralda and Nembrot Reybiola entered into a plea bargain with military prosecutors on Friday.

Under the agreement, the charge of violating Article of War 96, or conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman, was dropped.

But the three pleaded guilty to violating Article of War 97, for conduct prejudicial to good order and military discipline.

The court-martial presided over by Col. Virgilio Espinosa sentenced them down to seven years' forfeiture of nine months of their basic pay for the same six months and a delay in their promotion for a year.

They have been detained and placed in military confinement at Fort Bonifacio, the past year and four months.

A group of masked soldiers held a clandestine press conference on Jan. 30, 2004, and claimed that Malacañang had ordered the military to spy on the other presidential candidates.

In their statement, they also called for the resignation of then Defense Secretary Eduardo Ermita and condemned politicking in the military.

Two of those at the press conference, Captains Marcos Bertolino and Pearl Llanera, were cleared after they agreed to testify against the others.

Solitaire Alcaraz, a civilian who was at the press conference, was not charged before the military court.

Perfecto "Bert" Arayata, a staunch critic of the President, was also implicated in Kawal Pilipinas's activities but he was not charged.

"The group seemingly allowed themselves to be used by some misguided elements in furthering their ulterior motives," an Army statement said.

"Having admitted and realized their wrongdoings, the general court-martial imposed penalties commensurate to the offense committed," it added.

Thanks, actor tells Bunye

CHARACTER actor Nes Cortez yesterday was partisan in his thanks to Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye for naming him as a possible replacement for President Macapagal-Arroyo.

In an interview over dzBM radio, Cortez, one of the most ardent boosters of the late Ferdinando Pro. Bunye's name was "honor" to be included in the list of persons Bunye said were possible successors to the President should she be ousted from power.

Cortez even urged De presidential spokesperson to "jump ship" and join the opposition.

"It must be hard peddling all those lies of the administration. You might find life easier with us because we only deal with the truth," Cortez said.

He said Bunye was caught in a lie last week when he held up two compact discs purportedly containing phone conversations between the President and Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano discussing plans to rig last year's elections.

Bunye at first said it was the President on the tape, only to retract his statement a few days later after receiving flak from both the opposition and administration camps.

The militant group Bayang Aksyonang Mahihirapan (Bayan) yesterday vowed Bunye for making "overbearing" remarks when he commented on the lack of alternatives to President Arroyo, Cortez among them.

Bayan said Ms Arroyo herself was not [illegible] the job.

"Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo wasn't exactly the first and best choice in the people's minds to replace [Joseph] Estrada after Edsa 2. She got to be president because she was the so-called constitutional successor, an unelected bumbling. But she didn't make her the most deserving choice at the time," said Bayan secretary-general Renato M. Reyes Jr.

Bunye had defended the opposition's lack of a viable alternative to the President and its lack of development programs.

"They should ask the public who they want to put in power. Will it be [retired] Gen. Fortunato Abat? Will it be Senator Francisco [Joseph] Estrada? Will it be from the left or from the group of Ate Bayan [communist spokesperson Rigoberto Tiglao]?" Will it be Bro. Eddie? Bunye had said in every draft' remarks.

Reyes said Bunye's remark was unsolicited and was unsurprising because it reduced the anti-Arroyo protests to mere attempts at a power grab by inept opposition politicians.

"Maybe that's their thinking when Edsa 2 was unfolding, but they shouldn't assume we think the same way they do," he said.

Reyes said the decision of who should replace Ms Arroyo should be left to the people. He suggested that a transitional coalition government with institutions running from a "broad united front" should lead the country while waiting for new presidential elections. (WITH Cabacungan Jr.

Vicarious traumatization of journalists

By Ma. Gemma P. Dayo

(First of two parts)

AFTER surviving a Bicol helicopter crash a few years ago while on coverage, GMA-7 TV reporter Jiggy Manicad felt fortunate that he emerged physically whole, along with the rest of the passengers and crew.

"It was like slow motion," Manicad recalls the moments before the chopper hit the ground. "My first instinct was to find out if my cameraman was alive." The terrifying incident was on cam for Manicad to later see.

Life-threatening scenario

He seemed okay right after that, despite a few bumps here and there. "Two days later, that was when I really cried," Manicad says. He has since avoided riding helicopters if he could help it. The sound of chopper blades are enough to replay in his mind the life-threatening scenario.

Not long after that, Manicad was sent to Iraq to cover the impending war but he and the crew were pulled out before the US bombings began. He continues to do his day-to-day work, sometimes going to disaster-stricken areas to report on the sufferings people undergo.

At age 38, the TV journalist has experienced both direct and vicarious trauma (VT).

A clear brush with death is easy to recognize as a traumatic one. But other experiences could be just as traumatic, only they are not easily recognized, even often denied as one's own.

Extreme experiences

Witnessing extreme suffering of people whom one is tasked to report about. Surviving an attempt on one's life. Harassment and threats from irate persons whose wrongdoing was exposed. Being kidnapped and held by terrorists. Colleagues being murdered. Watching someone's life being violently ended. Photographing bombsite or corpses being hauled onto trucks are the cues in the Ormoc landslides. Being in a crossfire. Getting to stories of despair and hopelessness for long periods and writing about them for long periods. Blogging into disaster scenes and treading on perilous grounds.

These are some incidents in a Filipino working journalist's life that could be either directly or vicariously traumatic. Journalists are not all made of the same stuff and each one copes with extreme experiences in a particular way.

Many journalists could be going through vicarious traumatization (VT) without fully recognizing it as such. "It's all in a day's work," or "Trabaho lang" fit goes with the job(. Journalists are wont to say with aplomb after emerging from a terrifying coverage. So cold here in a conflict zone, they seem to think, is all it takes to forget the work-related trauma.

Many of these experiences could be handled as situation-traumatism (ST). Vicarious means those are "experienced or realized through imaginative or empathetic participation in the experience of another."

VT seminar

But journalists must not keep it all to themselves. Like other workers in the service profession who constantly face traumatic situations, they could be helped to cope and deal with their work-related stress, pain and fatigue. Or else those might adversely affect their personal lives.

Aware of the spate of killings of journalists and their life-threatening encounters, the University of Santo Tomas (UST) Center for Psychosocial Development and Consultancy Services recently conducted a seminar on "Vicarious Traumatization Among Journalists." This was meant to help journalists understand VT, its common signs and effects and to help equip them with coping strategies in dealing with trauma, vicariously experienced or otherwise.

Dr. Johnny Thwaites, diplomate and board-certified expert on traumatic stress and psychologist Ida Lourdes C. Abellan conducted the VT seminar.

There are countless situations or activities that could be traumatic for journalists. Some of those are war zone stations, reporting on disasters and crimes, probing into cases of abuse such as child rape, being constantly in life-threatening situations, etc. Nonstop reporting on stressful situations could take its toll.

Coping techniques

While in training, those in the helping professions – social workers, medical practitioners, rescue workers, psychologists and counselors – are usually equipped with physical and psychological coping techniques. Not being directly involved, but simply reporting "as outsiders," journalists are often left on their own to master their coping mechanisms.

Journalism schools do not always have coping strategies on their curriculum. (The Ateneo University's Konrad Adenauer Center for Journalism has recruited clinical psychologist Dr. Leandro A. Carmelino as a resource person on VT.)

Media corporations might be more concerned with circulation and ratings and promote their reporters as it each of them is still Pitching Journalism (those doing coverage), like the rest of the working unwashed, are simply supposed to deliver.

Shell shock

Journalists' traumas, like the shell shock of soldiers in the battlefield, is slowly being recognized and addressed abroad. But in the Philippines, where the trauma is both direct and vicarious, an empirical study has yet to be done.

Trauma could be physical, psychological or both at the same time. Psychological trauma involves the emotions and the mind. This is the type of trauma that is often denied or neglected.

Traumatic trauma, as differentiated from direct trauma, is "second-hand or indirect." One feels the pain of someone's suffering or one gets traumatized by the trauma experienced by another. Here the journalist is not a player in the ongoing conflict or traumatic event, but is merely reporting.

But the trauma, vicarious or otherwise, does not easily fade away. The aftermath – post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) – could be severe and debilitating.

(To be continued)

Why RP lacks teachers

Flunkers, low pay add to woes

By Alcuin Papa

THE COUNTRY produces enough education graduates to arrest the shortage of teachers in the public schools. But many of them do not pass the licensure exams and more opt to go abroad to work as domestics.

Ang Bayan Youth Party spokesperson Carl Marc Ramota said many of those who manage to pass the local licensure tests actually teach but then "some of them eventually abandon their profession in favor of jobs that are available here or abroad."

"Teachers who are supposed to supply the brain, so to speak, for the country's youth are themselves part of the brain drain," Ramota said.

He said the current crop of teachers, which he described as "the best and the brightest," are now abroad.

Each year, United States school districts need to hire around 200,000 teachers. So high is the demand that private recruiters plan to place at least a million foreign teachers in American classrooms up to 2007, Ramota said.

"More striking is that a bigger number of them are giving up their jobs and prestige in the Philippines in order to work as housemaids abroad," he said.

Quoting reports from Migrante International, Ramota said some 20 percent of the estimated 100,000 Filipinos working as domestics in Hong Kong, Singapore and countries in the Middle East, are former teachers or at least had teaching backgrounds.

"Ironically, while the public schools are experiencing a shortage of teachers, thousands of college hopefuls flock to Teacher Education programs every year," Ramota said.

In the Philippines, Education is the second most popular college course. Every year, more than 400,000 college students aspire to become teachers, Ramota said.

Practically all tertiary or college level institutions in the country offer degrees in education. From school years 1994-95 to 2001-02, enrollment in education and teacher training courses went up by 46.20 percent.

However, Ramota said, records of the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) showed that only a fraction of the thousands who take education courses graduate and pass the licensure examinations. Specifically, only a little more than 100,000 education students reach their senior year.

And of the more than 100,000 who graduate, only a few pass the licensure tests. The 2003 Licensure Examinations for Teachers (LET) only registered a 26-percent passing rate—or, conservatively, 26,000 examinees—for both elementary and secondary education.

This is a far cry from the number of those who enroll every year, estimated at around 400,000. This means only 25 percent of those who graduate pass the LET.

"Many education institutions are producing half-baked graduates who add to the bulk of LET non-passers and unemployed or underemployed teachers. Even these schools are now being turned into diploma mills rather than training grounds for future mentors," Ramota said.

In addition, Ramota said that since 2001, the salaries of government employees, which include teachers, have been frozen. The last salary increases were given in 2000, a 10 percent increase or P440, and in 2001, 5 percent or P242.

A teacher's starting salary is only P9,939 a month, a little higher than the minimum wage in Metro Manila. In April 2005, the family living wage in Metro Manila, or the amount needed to fulfill the needs of a family of six, was pegged at P618.09 daily or P18,542.70 monthly.

Also, Ramota said a study released by the International Labor Organization (ILO) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Unesco) showed that teachers in the Philippines worked an average of 1,176 hours per year and taught classes of over 50 students each.

"Definitely, whatever salary they receive does not correspond to their workload," he said.

Hence, Ramota said the teachers should not be blamed for leaving the country or for working as housemaids.

RP seamen's competence upheld

By Jaroma Aning

THE INTERNATIONAL Maritime Organization has reaffirmed the competency of Filipino seamen, saying the Philippines was continuously in compliance with the 1978 Convention on Standard Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW).

Acting Labor Secretary Manuel Imson, presiding chair of the Maritime Training Council, said the IMO's statement ensured the Philippines' inclusion in the organization's "White List," which enumerates the countries with competent seafarers.

The list, Imson said, thus serves as a reference for the international shipping industry when it recruits seafarers.

"This augurs well for the preservation and enhancement of the employment of Filipino seafarers on board ocean-going ships. Foreign ship owners will be assured of the competence and capability of the Filipinos operating their ships," he said.

The IMO, in its 80th session on May 20-22 in London, confirmed through its Maritime Safety Committee that the Philippines had communicated the required information on the independent evaluation of the country's Quality Standard System and found the country to be consistently implementing the STCW.

As a party to the convention, the Philippines is required by the IMO to submit a report on the independent evaluation every five years. The report is needed to determine if the parties continue to give full and complete effort to the convention's relevant provisions.

Imson said the Philippines, through the MTC, submitted its report to IMO Secretary General Efthimios Mitropoulos on Jan. 29, 2004, before the IMO deadline.

The Philippine report covered the administration system for the Filipino seafarers' education and training, certification, revalidation and endorsement of certificates.

It also included the result of the independent audit of the quality standards system of the Professional Regulation Commission, Commission on Higher Education, Technical Education and Skills Development Authority, National Telecommunications Commission and the MTC Secretariat.

Highly preferred for their industry and facility with the English language, Filipino seafarers constitute some 20-25 percent of seafarers on ships plying international waters.

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Please check the box of your chosen session		TIME	SUBJECT CLASSIFICATION/ CREDIT UNITS (CU)	TOPIC	LECTURER
June 18, 2005	AM Session ☐	8-10am	Legal Writing & Oral Advocacy (2 CU)	Orality in Advocacy	Justice Magdangal M. De Leon *Associate Justice, Court of Appeals*
		10:15-12:15pm	Updates in Substantive & Procedural Laws (2 CU)	Practice & Procedure Before the Labor Arbiters & NLRC	Dean Froilan M. Bacungan *Former Dean, UP College of Law*
	PM Session ☐	1-3pm	MCLE-Prescribed: Technology & the Law (2 CU)	Scientific Evidence: DNA and its Analysis	Dra. Raquel B. Del Rosario-Fortun *M.D., FPSP, UP College of Medicine*
		3:15-6:15pm	Legal Ethics (3 CU)	The Lawyer's Pitfalls	Justice Hilarion L. Aquino *(ret.) Associate Justice, Court of Appeals*
June 25, 2005	AM Session ☐	8-10am	International Law (2 CU)	International Law & the Admission of Aliens	Atty. Rosalde P. Ledesma *Head, Board of Special Inquiry, BI*
		10:15-12:15pm	MCLE-Prescribed: Reforms in the Law (2 CU)	2004 New Rules on Notarial Practice	Justice Hector L. Hofilena *(ret.) Associate Justice, Court of Appeals*
	PM Session ☐	1-3pm	Trial & Pre-Trial Skills (2 CU)	New Pre-Trial Rules of 2004	Justice Noel G. Tijam *Associate Justice, Court of Appeals*
		3:15-6:15pm	Alternative Dispute Resolution (3 CU)	Mediation & Arbitration of Construction Disputes	Dean Custodio O. Parlade *Former Dean, San Sebastian College of Law, Commercial Arbitrator*
July 2, 2005	AM Session ☐	8-10am	Update in Substantive & Procedural Laws (2 CU)	Taxation Laws & the Corporation	Justice Japar B. Dimaampao *Associate Justice, Court of Appeals*
		10:15-12:15pm	Alternative Dispute Resolution (2 CU)	ADR in the Workplace	Dean Froilan M. Bacungan *Former Dean, UP College of Law*
	PM Session ☐	1-3pm	MCLE-Prescribed: Reforms in the Law (2 CU)	Reforms in the Dangerous Drugs Act	Justice Diosdado M. Peralta *Associate Justice, Sandiganbayan*
		3:15-6:15pm	Legal Ethics (3 CU)	Civil, Criminal & Administrative Liabilities of a Lawyer	Justice Jose L. Salvo, Jr. *Associate Justice, Court of Appeals*
July 9, 2005	AM Session ☐	8-10am	Legal Writing & Oral Advocacy (2 CU)	Pleadings & Appellate Briefs	Justice Hugo E. Gutierrez, Jr. *(ret.) Associate Justice, Supreme Court*
		10:15-12:15pm	Updates in Substantive & Procedural Laws (2 CU)	Significant New Provisions & Amendments in the Procedural Rules	Justice Ruben T. Reyes *Associate Justice, Court of Appeals*
	PM Session ☐	1-3pm	Trial & Pre-Trial Skills (2 CU)	Trial Technique	Justice Edilberto G. Sandoval *Associate Justice, Sandiganbayan*
		3:15-6:15pm	Updates in Substantive & Procedural Laws (3 CU)	Updates in Commercial Laws	Justice Jose C. Vitug *(ret.) Associate Justice, Supreme Court*
Total Credit Units			36 CU		

Date/Day/Time: June 18 & 25, 2005 and July 2 & 9, 2005 Saturdays, from 8:00 AM to 6:15 PM

Venue: Ballroom II, Valle Verde Country Club (beside PSC Complex, *formerly ULTRA*), Capt. Henry Javier St., Bo. Ugong, Pasig City, Metro Manila

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Water lack new cause of wars in Cordilleras

SAGADA – Mountain springs are the lifeblood of the majestic rice terraces of the northern Philippines, but bringing the emerald masterworks to the clouds fit for tourist eyes sometimes required the spilling of blood.

Carved from the sides of towering peaks, some of the plots had been renovated over the past decade as tribes of Igorots, the hardy descendants of head hunters, fought deadly battles for control of the precious but diminishing water sources.

But following a truce in April, the irrigation canals have since been flowing again into the terraces on either side of the mountain, just in time to save the dry season crop of aromatic upland rice.

"We would have avoided this war," says Domingo Kally, the 64-year-old president of the irrigation cooperative of Barangay Fidelisan on the outskirts of the tourist resorts of Sagada, some 1,222 kilometers northwest of Manila.

"If only they had had more respect for the boundaries laid down by our forefathers," Kally says, referring to the long and destructive conflict with the village of Cadaclan, across the mountain to the east.

The water war had simmered since the 1990s as the Cadaclan folk dammed up the streams to divert the water to their village, leaving the terraced farmers, says Ben Mangchev, an official of the National Irrigation Administration.

Living isolated lives amid mountainous forests, the Cordillera peoples had avoided battle until World War II and through the days of the grisly practice of headhunting are long gone, the warrior tradition dies hard.

Apolat Balicao "we need guns," says flatly standing next to irrigation canals that bisects the village of galvanized iron-walled huts homes that sit on a ridge below the terraced plots, festooned with scarecrows to drive away soul-eating sparrows.

8 river systems

The Cordillera mountain range serves as the headwaters for eight major river systems that irrigate farms and provide top water to the northern Philippines.

But from then and land conversion into farming or cattle pastures had dried up some aquifers, says government forest ranger Alex Marcelling, who supervises a 4,150-ha reforestation project funded by a loan from the Asian Development Bank.

"It has been said that this new convert will use a ration of water, and that was may even be bought over water," ADB vice president Hiromichi Muto has said.

Compromise

In the Cordillera, blood has already been spilled, but the April truce was a compromise with Sadsharin ownership of the springs that feed the streams being recognized by the Balicao, who in turn were guaranteed a share of the water.

"The Fidelisan people agreed to share because three of their people had been taken hostage," says Sagada Mayor Robert Bastian. "When the priest paid the fifth, people released the hostages."

The local government's downfall only on that the dispute was beyond the scope of formal law. The provincial government's mediation of the conflict after a meeting by the village elders of both tribes, and no one was prosecuted for the killings.

The quaint medieval anarchy bloody, long-running boundary disputes between the villages of Bulbut and Betwagan in the northern Cordillera, and to a lesser degree, Ifugao's own longstanding disagreements with neighboring Ilocos town over top water access to tributary of the Abra river.

Frequent problem

The mayor points out this dispute has been peaceful. "We will try to negotiate with the Ilocos people to allow us to build a dam," Bastian says.

"Disputes over water rights are becoming a frequent problem now," says provincial engineer Arsenio Dangal. "With the increased population, the water sources will not be enough to supply everyone."

A major earthquake devastated the northern Philippines 15 years ago and altered the course of Cordillera mountain streams.

"Right after the earthquake in 1990, when the sources of water for these areas were gone, some areas became denuded," says Cameron Odsey, chief agriculturist for the Cordillera region. "The spring water went underground."

The mountainous terrain and poor road networks make the five provinces of the Cordillera – populated by 1.6 million people who are physically related to the Ifugaos and the Isneg minorities of Ifugao – among the poorest in the Philippines.

Rich in minerals

Poor aside link to the outside world is a landslide-prone highway blamed out of limestone. The road, often covered in mist that reduces visibility to near zero, snakes across the brows of mountains that soar more than 2,321 meters.

Despite its richly mineralized landmass, only two commercial gold and copper mines are in operation and its residents rely almost entirely on farming terraced plots by the side of the mountains, supplemented by government jobs and tourism.

Tourism is a major industry of the Cordillerus, but due to its remoteness visitors tend to be fun-seeked into a four stops – Baguio City and La Trinidad, Sagada's accessible only by a dirt road and is visited by backpackers who want to see the underground caves and ignore million hanging from limestone cliffs.

Big trees

Sabina Gen-ay arrived in the upper reaches of the Cordillerus as a teenaged bride in 1958. She remembers helping her husband clear a pine forest in the name of locals, on the edge of the 1,300-ha Mount Data National Park.

"When we first came here, the trees were so big two men could not wrap their arms around them," Gen-ay, now a newly widowed 66-year-old tells AFP as she works her 1.5-ha cabbage patch.

But when the rains are poor, the crops fail and the children go hungry.

"One time we had to return to Cervantes," she tells AFP pointing west with her stubby, dirt encrusted fingers in her native town on the lower reaches of the Cordillerus. "There we had to plant corn, yams and cassava."

The demise of the mining sector due to low prices of metals in the early 1990s, and more recently due to popular opposition based on environmental grounds, also swelled the population of the farm-dependent upland villages, Odsey says.

"When the miners closed, the miners went home and it had a major impact on the local population," he says.

"Then had left behind swidden (kaingin) farms for Dec. 10 years. Now they go back to these swidden farms, and unnatural lands are being damned, leading to conflicts and turbulences," he says. AFP

A FIGURE walks past a row of scarecrows keeping birds away from a terraced rice field in Sagada. Water disputes between villages have left some of the rice fields without water and in ruins. –

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Mikey goes on leave from House; Iggy bides time

From page A1

because they are the ones who elected me to Congress," the older Arroyo said as the framed photograph of his embattled sister-in-law, the President, loomed behind him at the presidential lounge of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport Centennial terminal.

He, however, stressed that resigning from Congress was "out of the question," as he reiterated his innocence of the corruption charges hurled against him.

The younger brother of First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo held the press conference upon his arrival from Singapore yesterday at 5:20 p.m. He left last week to spend "quality time" with his wife and young daughter, whom he took on a night safari and the zoo.

Iggy Arroyo said he would reach a decision by today or tomorrow, following the "advice of his constituents."

"I'll talk to the barangay captains, to the people. I will take this to their level. I owe it to them," he said.

He added that he was set to file libel charges against his accuser, confessed jueteng bagwoman Sandra Cam, as he also welcomed the investigation of the Office of the Ombudsman into his alleged involvement in jueteng payoffs.

He also stressed that members of the President's family "have not done anything wrong."

"I'm sure she (Ms Arroyo) believes that I am innocent," he said.

Can defend themselves

But as far as Ms Arroyo was concerned, family members involved in a corruption scandal were on their own in defending themselves.

"They will take care of themselves, they will take care of their own defense," the President said in an interview published in the June 13 edition of Time magazine, in which she graced the cover.

Her statement was clearly an attempt to distance herself from allegations that her husband, son and brother-in-law had received payoffs from jueteng.

On June 8, when she ordered the Department of Justice to investigate her son and brother-in-law, Ms Arroyo said: "Nobody in my family or kin are above the law and no investigator or prosecutor could fear to uphold the law against them."

"I will stand for justice no matter who gets hurt," she said.

Family comes last

In the Time interview, the President made it clear that her family came last in her order of priorities.

She said it was her late father, President Diosdado Macapagal, who advised her that as a public servant, "the priority is God first, then country and family is last."

"So I have to be a wife last," Ms Arroyo said. "My attitude is that family comes last."

Asked how her husband and son were coping with the corruption accusations against them, she told Time that her husband "was very much upset, because he is very misunderstood."

"For my son—well, this is a shocker for him," the President said. "It is an introduction to Politics 101," referring to the fact that her son was a neophyte congressman.

In the same interview, Ms Arroyo stressed that "nobody was above the law" and "let the chips fall where they may."

The President said she was more concerned about doing her job. "I am very, very focused on my work, like a laser beam on the fiscal reforms."

Impartial investigation

Malacañang yesterday said the public could be assured of an "impartial and transparent" government investigation on the allegations that the President's son was involved in gambling payoffs now that he had announced he was taking a leave of absence from Congress.

In a brief statement, Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye "lauded" the move. "For too long, rumor, innuendo and unsubstantiated allegations have been hurled ostensibly against him but really against the President," he said.

With Mikey Arroyo on leave, Bunye said this would "pave the way for an impartial and transparent investigation by the Ombudsman."

The Office of the Ombudsman is now investigating the jueteng payoffs after the President ordered it to take over the job from the Department of Justice.

Good decision

Senate President Franklin Drilon, who had suggested to Ms Arroyo to institute reforms in view of the "perceived involvement" of her family in jueteng, also praised Mikey Arroyo for his decision.

"At the least, I hope the gesture would lessen the political tension and reinforce the public perception that under this administration, as GMA herself said, no one is above the law," he said.

Sen. Richard Gordon yesterday welcomed the decision as a "sure sign of statesmanship."

"By taking a leave, he has shown willingness to put the interest of the nation above all else, and that he defers and has respect for the rule of law," Gordon said in a phone interview.

Earlier in the day, opposition Sen. Jamby Madrigal said that calls for the Arroyo congressmen to resign were part of a tactic to divert attention away from the more serious charges of electoral fraud against Ms Arroyo.

Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. welcomed the administration lawmakers' calls for the resignation of the two Arroyos.

"It's good that they thought of it. That's better than nothing," he said at a briefing, even as he dismissed speculations that these were diversionary. "It's a step toward the eventual goal of asking the President to resign."

Sen. Rodolfo Biazon also said that calls for the resignation of the two lawmakers should be heeded to repair the President's "damaged capacity" to govern.

Innocent until proven guilty

Administration allies in the House immediately lauded Mikey Arroyo for voluntarily going on leave, but at least one opposition lawmaker said it would set a wrong precedent.

House Majority Leader Prospero Nograles and Nueva Ecija Rep. Aurelio Umali said the Pampanga lawmaker did the right thing.

"Mikey has exemplified statesmanship and delicadeza for opting to go on leave in the course of the jueteng probe," said Nograles, adding that the leave of absence would have to be approved by Speaker Jose de Venecia.

Umali said calls for the Arroyo congressmen to resign were without any legal basis since these had been made in reaction to unsubstantiated allegations of their involvement in jueteng.

"The Constitution says that an individual is innocent until proven guilty. What has happened in the Senate probe is that those implicated have been tarred as guilty until proven innocent," he said.

Bad precedent

Quezon City Rep. Vincent "Bingbong" Crisologo described the decision as a "bad precedent" because Mikey Arroyo "has reacted on the basis of unsubstantiated accusations made in the Senate, and the authorities have yet to begin their probe to ascertain the truth of these allegations."

While it was laudable on the part of Arroyo to pledge his full cooperation to the probe, he said it was still premature because "he could have done so without taking a leave of absence from his duties as a legislator."

"If it can be proven that Congressman Arroyo is guilty, then he should not only be stripped of office, he should be punished and imprisoned," said Crisologo.

Mikey Arroyo may have gone on leave, but he has yet to answer adequately the accusations against him, according to House Minority Leader Francis Escudero.

"He should answer squarely the charges against him," Escudero said. "True or not, there is a negative perception among the public about them. Resigning or going on leave is not the solution. They should answer the accusations and not issue blanket denials."

Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez said yesterday that the young lawmaker could be liable for "abandonment of post."

In a telephone interview, Gonzalez said, "I was the one who raised the question of abandonment of post... The constituents are the ones who will be suffering," he said.

Mikey Arroyo could not say if he would go back to Congress when it resumes session on July 25, but a congressional source said he would "be out of sight" until the political heat generated by the jueteng inquiry subsided.

It had yet to be ascertained if his action was a calculated move by Malacañang to save the presidency following calls from Senators Drilon, Magsaysay Gordon and Lacson to sanction erring members of the First Family.

Low profile

In Senate hearings, jueteng witnesses Wilfredo Mayor, Richard Garcia and Cam alleged that Mikey Arroyo received a monthly jueteng bribe ranging from P500,000 to P600,000, while Iggy Arroyo received P400,000.

So far, no witness has come out to directly implicate the First Gentleman.

Calls for Ms Arroyo's husband to take "a low profile" were gathering steam among Malacañang officials keen on reversing the tide of public opinion against the President.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita, in a press conference last week, said the decision of whether the First Gentleman should lie low was a personal matter and should be discussed between husband and wife.

Anakpawis party-list Rep. Crispin Beltran yesterday advised Mikey Arroyo to quit his post and focus on his fledgling movie career.

According to the imdb.com website, Mikey last appeared in the movies "Masamang Ugat" and "A.B. Normal," both produced in 2003. He has a forthcoming movie with Ethel Booba and a host of other congressmen titled, "Sablay ka na, Pasaway ka pa," under Cine Suerte Pictures. ***With reports from Gil C. Cabacungan Jr., Juliet Labog-Javellana, Philip C. Tubeza, Armand Nocum and TJ Burgonio***

Spy denies being tape source

From page A1

audio recording. He said he was simply asked to read a statement about government irregularities in exchange for which he would be given a post in a revolutionary government that would replace the Arroyo administration.

"They just wanted me to confirm that the tape came from the intelligence service," Doble said.

Distraught wife

In yet another amazing twist to the "tale of the tapes," the Doble story unfolded when the sergeant's distraught wife showed up in Manila and called her husband yesterday morning to ask his whereabouts. Arlene had arrived over the weekend from Kidapawan and said she had not seen her husband for two weeks.

Arlene said she sensed Doble's reluctance to speak to her on the phone. She said she asked him if he needed help. He only mumbled "mmm ..." It meant there was someone with him, she said.

He told her to turn off the phone and to expect a text message. "I am at San Carlos seminary, room 29, at the back, near the squatters' area," his later message read.

Police and military officials later said Arlene requested assistance to rescue her husband who allegedly was being detained against his will. Battle-ready troops and an armored personnel carrier were sent to the Seminary.

Bishop Socrates Villegas was enlisted to help get Doble out of the seminary.

On the brink of tears

"What can I do for you?" Villegas said when he saw Doble, who appeared "distressed" and on the "brink of tears."

"I just want to make sure that my children are safe," Doble said.

Villegas said he told Doble he could take him to his family. When Doble kept silent, Villegas called up his wife on her cell phone and allowed them to speak to each other.

Doble reportedly immediately asked his wife about their kids. After telling his wife "I love you," he told the bishop he was ready to join his family. They were later expected to be moved to a safehouse.

Ong had said Doble handed him the cassette tapes purportedly containing the hacked telephone conversation between Ms Arroyo and Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano.

Ong had told reporters that he had filmed the event as evidence that the recordings came from the army intelligence service—a claim Doble disputed.

How Doble got into the tightly guarded seminary, where Ong had sought sanctuary after the former National Bureau of Investigation official announced on Friday he had the authentic recordings of the wiretapped presidential conversation, remained unclear.

But Supt. Leopoldo Bataoil, Philippine National Police spokesperson, said that based on Arlene's statement, Ong could be held liable for illegal detention.

Ong's lawyers denied Doble was held against his will in the seminary.

Doble joined the Philippine Air Force in 1979. He transferred to the Isafp 10 years later.

More Koreans than Japanese now visit RP

By Jeremaine Aning

FOR THE first time, South Korea has overtaken Japan as the Philippines' principal source of foreign tourists from the East Asia/Pacific region, the Department of Tourism said yesterday as it released visitor arrival figures for the first 4 months of 2005.

The DOT's tourism research and statistics division said 147,471 South Koreans visited the Philippines between January and April 2005, compared to 128,020 Japanese.

In the same period last year, 132,329 Koreans and 132,328 Japanese visitors came to the country.

Overall, however, South Korea placed second to the United States in the DOT's list of foreign tourist arrivals while Japan ranked third. A total of 184,109 American tourists visited the Philippines in the first four months of the year.

From January to April this year, a total of 952,580 foreign tourist arrivals was recorded, or 18.5 percent more than the 771,309 visitors who came to the country in the same period last year.

Duran-upbeat

Tourism Secretary Joseph Durano said he was confident the country would continue to lure more tourists in the coming months.

"We believe the growth can continue as other ongoing and upcoming campaigns will add greater results to the ones we recently and we hope that positive outcome remains until we reach our target of five million foreign visitors by 2010," Durano said.

For South Koreans, the DOT adopted the slogan, "Feel the Philippines," to appeal to their emotional nature and prepared packages for them to better appreciate the "real taste" of the country.

The DOT's Seoul Korea chief Martin Reyes-Ehren earlier said the South Korean market had proved to be the most resilient source of tourists for the Philippines.

Koreans not intimidated

"Living in a country that was always jittery with the threat of terrorism, South Koreans are not easily intimidated by issues of security," he said.

The Korean peninsula was split in two in the early 1950s after the communist north and the democratic south fought what came to be known as the Korean War. Today, North Korea is communist while the south is democratic.

Travel agents and tour operators also point out that South Koreans, like Filipinos, are used to labor unrest and subject to similar protests.

"They describe the Philippines as having many islands and many countries, a developing country with poverty but at the same time an inexpensive honeymoon and golfing destination," Ehren said.

The DOT is targeting Koreans holiday-makers, honeymooners, students and special interest groups such as divers and golfers.

According to Ehren, the average South Korean tourist is male, between 31-50 years old, and either a professional, a technical worker or a businessman.

He usually comes in November-January or July-August, stays at hotels and resorts, and goes to Manila and Cebu for sight-seeing, shopping and visiting entertainment establishments.

Many are independent travelers who come for pleasure or business or to visit friends and relatives. They spend most of their money on accommodations, food, beverages and shopping.

More than half are first-time visitors, of which half are likely to repeat their visit to the Philippines. Most heard about the country from their friends, relatives or business associates.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Tuesday, June 14, 2005
11th Week in Ordinary Time
(1st Reading: 1 Cor 8:1-8
Gospel: Matthew 5:43-48

Jesus said to his disciples, "You have heard that it was said, Love your neighbor and do not do good to your enemy. But I tell you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you so that you will be children of your Father. Love your enemies—that means love of all—do not kill them, attack them, demonize them. Many churches say everything else is wrong in our lives and conviction and react them as deserving of anything we can subject them to—all self-righteously thinking we are the saviors. Our Father lets the sun and rain fall on the just and the unjust—and that includes us, not always in the just category. We pray for sinners, not just those who love us, or who are like us, but those we are afraid of, don't know and don't want to know, and those who do harm (remembering that circle of dark spots is in the same way). We are children of the Father, with Jesus. His Jesus and we are to be righteous and holy like our God—some absolution as the door in the earlier testament, but now, more specific and demanding in that we can't just pick and choose who we'll practice on. God already has set it waiting for this kind of love that stops evil, does no harm to the earth and invites sinners to the Friends of God.

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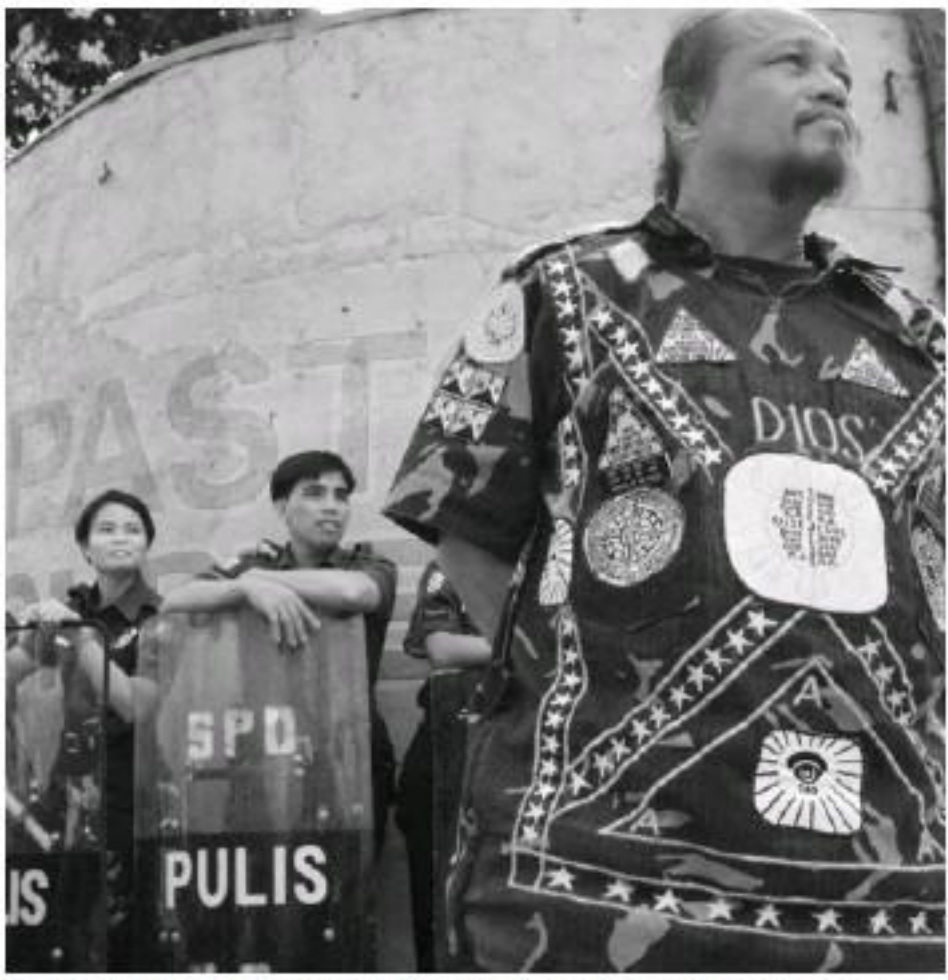

AN UNIDENTIFIED man, who claimed to be the Lord of Lords and General of the World, appeared in front of the San Carlos Seminary along Edsa where NBI Deputy Director Samuel Ong had taken refuge. EDWIN BACASNO

Ong slips out of seminary

From page A.1

Samuel Ong out of the San Carlos Seminary along Edsa, fearing police and soldiers would force him out of the facility where he had taken refuge since Friday, said Ong's lawyer Liwayway Vinzons-Chato. He was accompanied by Bishop Teodoro Bacani and two other prelates and two priests.

Five Army trucks—each crammed with 15 to 20 soldiers—and two armored personnel carriers had deployed outside the seminary hours earlier. Chato said some of the soldiers attempted to scale the seminary walls, prompting the decision to move Ong to an undisclosed location.

Fr. Robert Reyes later told the inquirer that the Church had not abandoned Ong. It was not immediately known if the churchmen would surrender Ong once a warrant for his arrest was issued, as they had said. The warrant was expected to be handed out today when the courts open after the three-day Independence Day weekend.

Earlier, Chief Supt. Leopoldo Bataoil, Philippine National Police spokesperson, said police would avoid an armed confrontation with Ong and seek the help of Church leaders to resolve the deadlock.

"We will keep him safe from any harm," said Bataoil, "unless he takes his own life."

He said police would prepare for the possibility of an armed confrontation with Ong but would try and ensure that it did not happen.

Dead meat

As the impasse in the seminary went into a third day, Ong had said in radio interviews that he feared for his life if he were taken by police because of his disclosure.

"I won't be arrested alive," he said. "Once I leave the seminary, I tell you I'm dead meat."

He had appealed to Filipinos to mount an Edsa-style massing similar to those that led to the ouster of Ferdinand Marcos and Joseph Estrada from the presidency. But few responded to his plea.

Ong surfaced on Friday to claim that he had the "mother of all tapes" of an alleged wiretapped telephone conversation between Ms Arroyo and Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano purporting to show that she had cheated in the last election.

He said the tape was given to him by members of the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (Isafp).

Ong's disclosure further muddled a bizarre controversy triggered a week ago when Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye claimed he had a doctored CD purporting to show that Ms Arroyo was pressing for a one-million vote margin over her closest rival, the late movie actor Fernando Poe Jr. *(See timeline on front page.)*

He said the tape had been tampered with by Ms Arroyo's opponents in a bid to unseat her.

Bunye at first said the woman's voice was that of Ms Arroyo, but he later backtracked. He did not identify the man's voice, but opposition politicians and media reports identified it as that of Garcillano.

Garcillano has denied the allegations.

Alan Paguia, Estrada's former lawyer, last Tuesday came out with another tape and claimed it was the original wiretap.

Police and NBI officials have said they are seeking a warrant of arrest against Ong for alleged violation of the Anti-Wiretapping Law and sedition.

Ong's plea

As the standoff appeared to be coming to a head, Ong pleaded with Susan Roces, Poe's widow, to summon a "people power" show of support.

"I ask her to give me protection. Once I'm out of here, no one will protect me... With her big heart, I know she will come and give me succor," he said.

Roces went to the seminary for a five-hour meeting with Ong on Saturday, but she later said any action that should be taken in connection with the controversy should be in accordance with the law. ***With reports from Leila B. Salaverria, Christian V. Esguerra and Norman Bordadora***

'Do not disturb' sign up: Dolphins mating

From page A.1

Strait to watch the beautiful sea creatures are advised to remain absolutely quiet.

Dr. Lemmuel Aragones explained that dolphins and whales need privacy, especially during summer, the breeding season for most animals.

"Dolphin-watching used to be simple because there were very few boats involved in its operation," said Aragones, a Filipino marine professor at the University of Miami in Florida and at the University of the Philippines in Los Baños, Laguna.

"But there has been an increase in the number of boats in the last four years. Most of the boats do not know how to maneuver around these dolphins and whales," he said.

Workshop

Aragones and Dr. Edward Keith of the Nova Southeastern University in Florida were resource persons in a two-day seminar-workshop on whale and dolphin-watching and the conservation of cetaceans in southern Tañon Strait.

The June 8-9 workshop was sponsored by Bais City, Negros Oriental, and the SeaWorld Busch Gardens Conservation Fund, a US-based nonprofit foundation dedicated to wildlife conservation, research, education and animal rescue.

Among those who attended were operators of dolphin and whale-watching tours, as well as legislators from Bais and Tanjay cities, Manjuyod town in Negros Oriental, and from the towns of Ginatilan, Samboan, Malabuyoc and Alegria in Cebu.

Protocols

The seminar aimed to set up guidelines and protocols to ensure that the dolphins were not disturbed and to come up with suggestions on how to make dolphin and whale-watching activities sustainable.

"For a long time now, we always clapped our hands and shouted at the sight of these dolphins and whales. We never realized these creatures could be intimidated by the sound," said Bais Mayor Hector "Tara" Villanueva.

"This protocol would really change dolphin and whale-watching tours as we know it," said Bais Councilor Angelo Teves, chair of the city's environment committee.

The tours are a major revenue earner for Bais. From an annual income of P400,000 five years ago, it now grosses P1.6 million a year, said city tourism officer Antonio Serrano Jr.

Aragones and Keith also revealed findings of their current study, showing a decline in the number of species sighted in the area in the last five years.

Fishermen's fear

Dolphins and whales have been observed to show evasive behavior. "This could have resulted from disturbance from boats or entanglement with fishing gear," Aragones said.

He debunked a widespread belief among fishermen that dolphins had caused the decline in their fish catch.

"The overwhelming reason for the decline of fish catch is overfishing or illegal fishing. Dolphins are not responsible for overeating the resources," Aragones said.

He said this topic had been discussed all throughout the world and the question that needed to be answered was: "What is the impact of overfishing on the cetaceans?"

Tañon Strait was declared a protected seascape under Presidential Proclamation No. 1234 issued by then President Fidel V. Ramos. It is the habitat of 11 of the 24 species of marine mammals found in the Philippines.

The area was to be managed by a Tañon Strait Commission, but the agency was dissolved in 2001 and has yet to start operations.

Deny Erap Bible study, prosecutor asks court

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The WORLD

Editor Lorenne B. Greco

JUBILEE: Iranian women supporters of presidential candidate Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani during a rally in Tehran June 10. AFP

Iran hit by wave of bombings before key polls; US blamed

AHVAZ, Iran—Iran was struck by a wave of deadly bombings in this restive southwestern city and the capital Sunday, with the Islamic regime accusing US-backed "terrorists" of seeking to destabilize the country just days ahead of presidential elections.

At least eight people were killed and 75 wounded by a series of four blasts outside several public buildings in Ahvaz, an ethnic Arab majority city close to the Iraqi border that is capital of oil-rich Khuzestan province.

Later Sunday, another blast hit a bank branch in Tehran, killing two people and seriously wounding at least two others, official media said.

Two smaller home-made bombs were reported to have exploded on other parts of the capital, without causing any casualties.

"The terrorism of Ahvaz infiltrated from from the region of Basra" towards Iran, Iraq top national security official Ali Agha-Mohammadi told AFP.

"These terrorists have been trained under the umbrella of the Americans in Iraq," he charged, adding that Iran suspected British troops across the border might also have links to the separatist groups, the Iranian-based Ahvaz Arab People's Democratic Popular Front.

"We call on the Americans and the British to condemn these attacks and hand over the terrorists in Iraq. Sadly, there have so far not said anything," Mohammadi declared.

He said "several terrorists have been arrested," but gave no further details.

Ahvaz was hit by several days of unrest in April, only the 24-year-old Islamic regime then blaming "counter-revolutionaries."

It was a non-existent opposition group, the People's Mujahedeen, a feared armed cult backed by Iraq, and Mohammadi said he believed they were involved in some of Sunday's attacks in Tehran.

"The calls for a boycott of the vote had failed, so the terrorist groups based in Iraq are trying to use attacks to disrupt the elections and prevent a strong voter participation," he said.

Iran is due to go to the polls to elect a new president on Friday.

"The attacks are a failure, because so far just the regime has been confronted by its women," said Khuzestan's deputy governor, Gholam-Reza Shafaei.

An AFP reporter in Ahvaz said the area around the local governor's office, one of three public buildings targeted, was strewn with shards of glass and rubble.

Scores of police had sealed off the area, and by early evening uniformed workers were already clearing the rubble and mopping up pools of blood.

"It was inhuman, a horrible thing. There was a small child walking around looking for his dead mother," said Abdel Hussein Kaid-Moghaedi, a state nurse at an Ahvaz hospital where many of the casualties were taken.

"This is an American plot," he said, adding that many of the wounded had suffered concussion and blows on arrival.

The huge blasts occurred between 9 a.m. and 11 a.m., hitting the governor's office, two other public buildings and a residential area which is home to the director of state television operations in Ahvaz.

The explosions in Tehran occurred at Imam Hussein square, Interior Ministry spokesperson Jalaleddeh Alaminia told AFP. Witnesses said the blast was heard after 4 p.m., adding the bomb was hidden in a rubbish bin.

Ahvaz, situated 900 km southwest of Tehran and 50 km from the Iraqi border, was rocked by ethnic violence from April 15-18. AFP

UN calls on Malaysia to let refugees work

KUALA LUMPUR—The UN refugee agency on Monday urged Malaysia to allow thousands of refugees living there to work, saying it would help relieve an overburdened welfare system and curb a crackdown on illegal workers.

Malaysia had launched "a desperate search" for new foreign workers from Indonesia and elsewhere amid Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi's drive to attract more foreign investment, said Volker Turk, head of the UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) in Malaysia. "Why not use the existing refugee population that cannot be deported anyway for economic purposes?

"Some of them are already working anyway, illegally, so quite a source of income. Why not legalize and regularize that?" he told a UN-sponsored conference on migration and refugee issues.

Allowing refugees to seek legal employment would benefit Malaysia's economy and democracy, he said. Immigration authorities say the country has about 90,000 registered refugees and asylum seekers, mostly from Indonesia, Myanmar and Sri Lanka.

Malaysia is also one of Asia's biggest importers of labor. Foreign workers, legal and illegal, number around 2.6 million out of its workforce of 10.5 million.

The repatriation of about 400,000 illegal immigrants, mostly low-wage Indonesian workers, during a four-month amnesty that ended in March left a huge gap in the agricultural, construction, manufacturing and service sectors.

"It may be in the long term less sensitive [in security and economic terms] to integrate the estimated 50,000 refugees here in the country, to ease the job market so readily available for regularized," said Turk.

There are some 40,000 refugees officially registered with the UN HCR in Malaysia—about 20,000 from Indonesia's troubled Aceh province and some 10,000 Muslim Rohingyas from military-run Burma, formerly known as Burma.

The remaining 30,000 are ethnic-refugee minorities from Burma and elsewhere. AFP

France welcomes hostage's return but puzzled by official silence

PARIS—France celebrated Monday the return home of a French journalist held hostage in Iraq for five months, but questions about the circumstances of her captivity and release were deflected by authorities who denied a ransom had been paid.

The repatriation Sunday of Florence Aubenas, a 44-year-old veteran correspondent for the Liberation newspaper, made the front page of all the country's dailies and dominated news broadcasts.

Aubenas and her local interpreter, Hussein Hanun, also 44, were freed Saturday by the secular-rebel group that had abducted them outside a Baghdad hotel on Jan. 5.

President Jacques Chirac and other officials said their release was a result of a high-profile public campaign of support and to a behind-the-scenes operation by intelligence and military services.

They would not give any details, however, and a ceiling has been placed on how far reporters can go in journalists' coverage of the case.

Interior Minister Philippe Douste-Blazy, who met with the freed reporter in Cyprus to bring her back to Paris on an air force jet, said Monday no details would be forthcoming out of concern for the safety of other people he said were held hostage in the countryside of Baghdad.

"You'll understand I can say absolutely nothing about that," he told RTL radio.

"Out of respect for the safety of these people, these are things that cannot be talked about."

The government has categorically denied a suggestion made by the head of the Paris-based media rights group Reporters Without Borders, Robert Menard, and others that a ransom was paid.

But that did not stop media speculating that France had paid some sort of price to secure the release of Aubenas.

The Liberation daily in a 28-page special on its correspondent's return, noted the government denials and said "common sense says there is no release without some thing in return and common sense obviously is not wrong."

It said that, although kept informed of some of the official moves, it did not know whether a ransom was paid.

"The truth is that, beyond the president of the republic and a few of his collaborators, nobody knows [and probably will never know with certainty] what were the terms that ensured Florence and Hussein their freedom."

A government source also able to give nonquotation "not necessarily in financial terms" to avoid the ultimately counterproductive perception that it would always pay for the return of one of its citizens. The source refused.

Since July, the rebel cabinet of Liberation, did not identify the kidnappers, but spoke of a unspecified "organized crime" in Iraq, whose hostage-takers may "know the price to pay" for a release, and urged calm by the French journalist.

The abduction of foreigners and Iraqis has become rampant over the past year, with more than an estimated 150 people being taken in that time by groups and criminal gangs from across the region.

Most of the victims have been released after a few months in captivity.

Three bodies, including those of two Iraqi aides who went to rescue Aubenas and Hanun, were found in a remote Baghdad area on April 6, while the bodies of seven more were found in other three unidentified, bullet-riddled and tortured bodies in the north of the capital.

Police said on Sunday they had found the decomposed bodies of 25 executed men near Mahawrin, southeast of the capital, who had also been tortured before dying.

The discovery led Iraqis main Sunni electoral organization, the Committee of Muslim Scholars, to claim the dead were Sunni civilians, after charging in May that a former Shiite militia had carried out 16 Sunni killings of Imams.

Shiites have been a regular target of the relentless Sunni insurgency that killed almost 700 people last month.

In May, the committee accused a Shiite militia of killing Sunnis, and a spate of attacks between the two communities, including many targeting religious leaders.

It is the Badr Organization which is responsible for these killings, I take responsibility for what I am saying," said Committee spokesperson Haseeb al-Omar.

The Badr organization organized the officially disbanded militia of the Supreme Council of Islamic Revolution in Iraq, one of two leading political parties in the United Iraqi Alliance, which now dominates the government.

Dr Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick warned, at the time, that insurgents "are trying to split the society through sectarian killings."

Iraq's Shiites are struggling to bring the disproportionate Sunni minority into the political process after it largely boycotted January's elections, including the drawing up of the country's new constitution. AFP

FRENCH journalist Florence Aubenas smiling upon her arrival at Villacoublay's military airport, west of Paris, June 12. Inset photo, At left, a combination of two video grabs from a tape in Baghdad March 1, shows Aubenas pleading for her life in an undisclosed location. AFP/REUTERS

Discovery of more tortured bodies raises tensions in Iraq

BAGHDAD—Iraqi police on Monday announced the discovery of six more bodies in Baghdad, most of them tortured before being executed, as tensions among the ranks of security forces rise in the wake of sectarian violence in the restive country.

The grim find came a day after police uncovered decomposed cadavers had been unearthed outside the capital and to Iraq, and France celebrated the release of a French journalist and her Iraqi fixer after being held hostage for five months.

But questions about the circumstances of her captivity and release were deflected by authorities who denied a ransom had been paid.

Aubenas and her local interpreter, Hussein Hanun, also 44, were freed Saturday by the secular-rebel group that had abducted them outside a Baghdad hotel on Jan. 5.

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Iranian women still wondering when real reform will come

By Parisa Hafezi

TEHRAN—Reuter—Angry? Impatient? Mina, an Iranian mother of two, is all three and more.

"Mina would you feel if someone took away your children?" the 34-year-old English teacher asked, clutching to her chest tearfully four that belonged to one of her daughters.

A Tehran court last month granted custody of Mina's two daughters, aged 6 and 10, to her ex-husband as part of their divorce settlement.

In Iran, where Islamic Sharia law is the bedrock of the legal system, divorced women can only keep their children up to the age of 7. After that, the father gets custody. Even this represents a recent, limited increase in a mother's rights; the age limit for boys used to be just 2 years.

Eight years after reformist cleric Mohammad Khatami swept presidential elections promising, among other things, improved legal rights for women in the Islamic state, many like Mina are still wondering when real change will come.

"Iran is a man's paradise. The law, culture and tradition all back them," said Mina-sarah, 28, who has spent months back from trying to divorce her drug-addict husband.

Shiite Iran also plans to lower the to elect a successor to Khatami, rules to legally banned from standing for elected executive posts.

Virtually all of the eight candidates, reformist and conservative alike, running in the race have pledged to make renewed efforts to improve women's status in society.

But in a country where a woman can be elected to parliament but cannot leave the country without her husband's permission, the position of women is still unclear. The Islamic state's criminal code gives different religious values and civil rights, a struggle Khatami was unable to win.

"Under Khatami's three years there is still no changes in the laws.

But we have a long way to go," said Soraiah Bagherzai, a women's rights activist.

One principle of limited progress is that more conservative men never without the ruling of a court in which a female legal observer is present, not without paying alimony.

Previously they had no absolute right to divorce without paying big sum for the other.

Since Khatami's first election win in 1997, women have entered previously male-only jobs such as and driving and the police.

Women have been prominent the more all-male preserves of senior mullahs and the country's top ruling theme is a 26-year-old woman.

Foreign visitors to Iran often focus on dress restrictions which oblige women to cover their heads and wear long, loose-fitting clothes to hide their figure.

Under Khatami, enforcement of the dress code has relaxed and many women wear tight-fitting coats and bright scarves pushed back to reveal masses of their dyed hair. Once banned, lipstick and eyeshadow are now ubiquitous.

But Iranian women's rights activists place down the importance of dress reform issues.

Instead they complain of laws that openly discriminate against women. Monetary compensation for a woman's life is half that of a man's and her testimony in court is accorded half of the value.

Interior, director and women's rights also need to be revised to establish gender equality, activists say.

But while many leading Iranian clerics openly support their claims, those in charge of powerful state institutions like the Guardian Council, the watchdog vetoing, have blocked most attempts by Khatami's reformist allies to boost women's rights. Reuters

Younger look to 'Magandang Umaga, Pilipinas'

LAST June 6, Channel 2's early morning show, "Magandang Umaga, Bayan," was retitled "Magandang Umaga, Pilipinas," and we started to see what other changes were in the works.

Well, more people have been let go of and new co-hosts have been added, the pace is generally faster, more "reporty" have been tapped to cover specific topics and the show looks younger and (dare we say it?) more sophisticated.

That last observation is probably due to the fact that the show's main couple is now Ashley and Kenko Bolivar, two responsible TV hosts who know what not to say on television in the morning, what many children are watching.

On the other hand, the show has an occasional portion in which viewers' questions about sex are answered. While we agree that sex education is necessary, there appears to be a considerable fuss here, because the show is relevant as early in the day. Perhaps this sex Q&A portion could be put into another show on a nighttime programming slot?

The show's "younger" look and feel is due to the inclusion of Wynn Aguinaldo and Bianca Gonzalez as co-hosts. It's a welcome move, because the Philippine population is generally young, so TV shows should be made more accessible and empathetic to this dominant demographic.

The show's bride piece is similarly welcome, except that it sometimes results in the more lovely superficial treatment of some topics that need to be given more serious.

So, broadcast good shouldn't be pursued in itself, and the show could occasionally take more time dealing with important issues that need longer and more substantial coverage.

The label's telecast was also guilty of overkill in its encomiast emphasis on stories about school opening day. While the topic is important, there were simply too many features devoted to the detriment of other topics that also needed attention.

All told, however, the refurbished "Magandang Umaga, Pilipinas" is an improvement on "M.U.P." so we wish the program well and this subsequent efforts at self-redefinition.

Fiesta San Miguel

THE VILLITA San Miguel restaurant and bar on Small Road Makati (Pasay rd. across Edsa) this Tuesday night will host Bistro Dy: Thursday, Mysterious and Idle Friday, KIA-7 and Fiasco, and Saturday, 90s Night with Sensitive Steel. Call 867-8888.

'War of the Worlds'

IS STEVEN Spielberg's new blockbuster, "War of the Worlds," Tom Cruise plays Ray Ferrier, a divorced dock worker and less-than-perfect father. Soon after his wife (Miranda Otto) and her new husband drop off his teenage son Robbie (Justin Chatwin) and young daughter Rachel (Dakota Fanning), a lightning storm hits his neighborhood.

Moments later, the witnesses an extraordinary event that will change their lives forever. A towering three-legged war machine emerges from deep beneath the earth, and before anyone can react, it incinerates everything in sight.

An ordinary day has suddenly become a most extraordinary event—the first strike in a seemingly alien assault on earth.

Any scramble to get his children away, embarking on a journey that will take them across the ravaged countryside, where they get sucked into the desperate tide of refugees fleeing from an unconventional army of tripods.

But, no matter where they run, there is no safety—only Ray's unstoppable will to protect his loved ones.

The contemporary retelling of H. G. Wells' seminal classic starts its run on June 29.

'Greatest Love of All'

EGOTISTA of the best love songs are compiled in "Greatest Love of All," Sony Warner Music Philippines. "Beneath My Wings," "Against All Odds," "How Do I Live?" "I Will Always Love You," "My Heart Will Go On," "Because You," "I Have To Say I'm Sorry," "Greatest Love of All," "Take A Bow," "How Am I Supposed to Live Without" and "That's Why You Go Away."

'True Horror'

THE DISCOVERY Channel series takes the supernatural world to its new series, "True World," premiering today at 11 p.m. The first episode searches for the truth behind vampires. Forensic experts from the Black Plague fork to Hollywood, Bram Stoker's blood-lusty monarch, to today's vampire clubs.

A spark of hope...

My mom drilled and talented than their counterparts 10 years ago.

Showcase gig

Although not all of the upstarts featured in the semi-final SU Guitarfest concert held recently in Makati deserve special attention, the fact is they all need encouragement. The appearance of that gig—whose sole purpose was to sell the latest models of the SU guitar brand—cannot be underestimated. It is very important for young bands to know there is room, and a venue, for their music. Those who searched the parking lot outside the Mall of Asia Arena for the old SU premises in Pasig will agree.

Those thoughts, if shared by Jacinto, may bode well in the light of his candidacy position to help steer the course and development of contemporary Filipino music. He's still got his radio station, and bringing back "Pinoy Rock & Rhythm" on the air should be count for celebration. Surely finding opposition wouldn't be a problem these days.

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BRITTANY MURPHY
TOM HARNEY
MICKEY ROURKE

SIN CITY

ROBERT RODRIGUEZ
FRANK MILLER
QUENTIN TARANTINO

OPENS JUNE 22

Can they survive the wedding day?

Michael Vartan
Jane Fonda
Jennifer Lopez

MONSTER-in-LAW

THE YEAR'S #1 ROMANTIC COMEDY

RESIDENTS of New Delhi dress in a swimming pool at a water park to beat the summer heat June 12. With the onset of summer, many parts of India are facing heat wave conditions with the day's maximum temperature reaching to over 45 degree Celsius. REUTERS

No plan to close Guantanamo, US Vice President Cheney says

WASHINGTON — The US government has no plans to close its prison at Guantanamo Bay, Vice President Dick Cheney said in an interview airing Monday, as controversy swirled over the war on terror detention camp flared anew over the latest revelations of detainee treatment.

"At present, there's no plan to close Gitmo. The president says we review all of our options on a continuous basis," Cheney told Fox News, using a slang term for the site.

"The important thing here is to understand is that the people that are at Guantanamo are bad people. I mean, these are terrorists by the most part. These are people that were captured in the battlefield of Afghanistan or rounded up as part of the Al-Qaeda network," Cheney said.

"We've already screened the detainees there and released a number, sent them back to their home countries. But what's left is hard core," he added.

The prison on the island of Cuba is holding some 540 terror suspects from 40 countries (an term in the context of political events after a Newsweek magazine report—later retracted—that military interrogators at the camp flushed a Koran in a toilet in order to elicit information.

That report and others sparked angry protests in the Muslim world and condemnation from human rights groups. On May 25, Amnesty International called Guantanamo the "gulag of our times."

Sunday Time Magazine published secret US interrogation logs describing how a top Saudi terror suspect was forcibly injected with fluids, gritted your teeth by dogs and straddled by a female soldier, a contact particularly abhorrent to Muslims.

Mohammed al-Qahtani was captured in Afghanistan in December 2001 and transported to Guantanamo, where he was interrogated from early November 2002 to early January 2003.

US authorities discovered he had been deported from Florida in August 2001 and believe he had sought entry to America to participate in the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks, Time said.

Interrogators poured water over (Qahtani), shaved his beard and declared (Guantanamo is) now a place for the US national anthem. He was also forced to strip nude and bark like a dog. Pictures of scantily clad women were also being waved his face.

His resolution deteriorated as "daily a one point that he was examined by doctors. The logs also recount him saying he wanted to commit suicide.

In a statement released late Sunday, the Pentagon disputed some of the—and essentially confirmed the authenticity of what it called "the compromised classified interrogation log." AFP

Blair meets Putin on mission to push debt write-off deal

ABJ UNDERNOURISHED Fulani child plays with sand in Gwagis, an outskirt of Minna, Nigeria, June 13. World Bank chief Paul Wolfowitz, who was in the nation Sunday, praised a historic deal to cancel the foreign debt of some of the world's poorest nations and said he was hopeful debt-ridden but also on the way to Africa's biggest debtor, Nigeria. AP

SOCHI-OGAROVO, Russia — Britain's Tony Blair met Russian President Vladimir Putin on Monday at the start of a mission to lay the groundwork for agreements on tackling African poverty and climate change at the Group of Eight summit.

The British prime minister is to meet four leaders in two days as he steps up preparations for the 8th gathering of the world's major industrialized nations at the luxury Gleneagles resort perched in Scotland from July 6-8.

He will be buoyed by an agreement by G8 finance ministers in London on Saturday to write off more than $40 billion of poor countries' debts.

But Blair was also likely to raise issues such as Western concerns over Russia's human rights record in his talks with Putin at the presidential summer residence west of Moscow.

The prime minister will also visit Germany, France and Luxembourg during his trip. British officials acknowledge the onus is on European Union and the rest over the EU budget until Britain's critics will figure prominently on their discussion list.

British believe Russia generally supports London's priorities for the G8 while it holds the presidency this year, the prime minister's spokesperson said.

In particular, London says Moscow can play a role in putting pressure on emerging economic powers such as China and India to sign up to targets on limiting carbon dioxide emissions which most scientists agree come from to global warming.

But relations between Russia has come under to raise addition the concerns of Western states and investors about human rights and the rule of law, highlighted by the controversial conviction on fraud charges of former oil tycoon Mikhail Khodorkovsky.

Blair's comparatively low-key recent remarks by Putin on human rights had been encouraging and Britain was anxious to treat him the pre-client planned to pursue the issue.

"We have not hidden the fact that we have had some concerns," he said. "We will not drop our legal concerns." Reuters

Spain reeling from worst drought in over 60 years

ALICANTE, Spain — No sooner are you off the plane at Alicante's sun-blasted airport but the billboards leap out with enticing advertisements of golden beach, azure skies, swimming pools and emerald green golf courses.

But a half-hour bike inland and the scrubbed earth, near-dry reservoirs and cracked crops tell a different tale.

Although the millions of tourists visiting Spain's "costas" this summer may not realize it, much of the nation is parched and there's no end in sight. The driest winter and spring in the more than 60 years have left reservoirs in some regions with 20 percent their normal capacity and crops across the European agricultural powerhouse rotting, withering, forcing have the nearly a third of them to close.

"Right now we're at a critical point," said José Manuel Bastul Tomás, 61, a cotton and pepper farmer from the southeastern town of Elche. "If we don't get substantial rainfall soon we're in real trouble."

Farmers in his region have been told they can irrigate for a maximum of eight minutes a day. That's doesn't rule out planting but crops to seek work in a shoe factory as he did during the 1990s when another prolonged drought hit Spain.

Lowest nationally so far are reservoirs at rains stored 6 billion cubic (159.1 95 billion) in tilled crops and fodder for grazing animals.

The Agricultural Ministry predicts grain production to be slashed 25 percent nationally this year with some southern and central regions suffering shortfalls of up to 50 percent.

George grows and vineyards still reeling from last winter's frosts, produce a meager harvest to the fall.

"If it doesn't rain soon, I'm going to be some 60,000 (US$80,000) in the red and I don't know how I'm going to handle that," said Joaquin Bertran, a 41-year old father of two, gazing helplessly across his stunted chickpea and barley fields outside the southeastern town of Caudete. Shafts that should be spanning a metre tall barely reach above their bottoms.

A home agronomist is raging over how the drought should be handled.

One side, led by the conservative opposition Popular Party, calls for revival of a mid-Hillside-wide transfer program that called for the water richer northern areas to supply the centre and south.

The governing Socialists, backed by most other parties and ecological groups, scrapped that plan as soon as they got into government last spring. They insist on a total rethink of water resources, based on desalination plants and water banks, with an emphasis on less squandering and more prudent use of aquifers and forests. AP

Swazi king takes home 11th wife

MBABANE — The king of impoverished Swaziland has married a 20-year-old maiden, making her the nation's 11th wife, a senior member of the royal household said on Monday.

Sing Mamisi, sub-Saharan African's last absolute monarch, picked Nokhutula Simelane as his latest bride in 2002 at the annual Umhlanga reed dance festival ceremony where thousands of bare-breasted maidens parade before the king.

After two years of complex wedding preparations, Nkosazana joined the royal household last week in a traditional ceremony where her face was painted with red ochre.

"Nokhutula is now an isibhakabhaka (royal queen)," a senior member of the royal household said.

Mswati, 37, already has 10 wives and one fiancee, who was a Miss Teen Swaziland finalist.

Critics lambast Mswati for his lavish lifestyle and for taking many wives in a country where more than two-thirds of his subjects live in abject poverty and 40 percent of adults live with HIV/AIDS.

Unrelated protests against Mswati's absolute rule and extravagant spending on cars and palaces for his wives have largely limited to the deeply traditional country. Reuters

Security tightened at Russian stations after blast derails train

MOSCOW — A passenger train derailed after an explosion early on Sunday, in what Russian officials said was an act of terrorism that slightly injured about 11 people on board.

"This was a terrorist attack," Alexei Starodubov, the deputy governor of the Moscow region, was quoted as saying by the ITAR-Tass news agency hours after the incident, which coincided with the annual national independence day holiday in Russia.

There were no reported fatalities but five people, including a boy of 11 and a girl of 10 months, were hospitalized with injuries after the two jumped the tracks near the town of Lyubertsy about 15 kilometers southeast of Moscow, according to Russian media reports.

Another 40 passengers sought medical advice, a railways spokesperson said.

None of the reported injuries was life-threatening. No one has acknowledged responsibility for the blast.

The interior ministry later announced that security measures were to be tightened at Russian railway stations and on board trains, especially those coming from the south.

Moscow has already announced plans for the stationing of police officers with special training in profiling criminal suspects based on behavioral and physical traits.

The authorities have not said they are following any particular lead but the incident has raised fears that Chechen rebels seeking independence may target civilian transport as the summer migration of millions of holiday makers begins.

Deputy Prosecutor General Nikolai Savichenko said an investigation had been opened but suspected "terrorism and attempted murder of two or more people."

There was no claim of responsibility for the attack, and police said they were searching the nearby area for the perpetrator.

Most of the injured were treated on the spot and released while the remaining passengers boarded another train and continued their journey to Moscow.

A spokesperson for the FSB security service said the train's driver reported seeing an explosion on the tracks ahead of him seconds before the train derailed. Two men were seen running off toward Ukraine.

Investigators also found explosives, including electric cables wired to one of the rails and a battery beside the tracks where the "supposed criminal" had before detonating the device, indicating that the blast was set off deliberately, the said. AFP

ILLUSTRATED PEOPLE
People with tattooed backs line up on the Zandvoort beach in the north-west of the Netherlands in an attempt to set a world record of the longest line of tattooed backs June 12. The line measured 49.8 meters and has been sent to the Guinness Book of Records for verification. REUTERS

Drink, drug abuse common among UK's doctors, nurses

LONDON — Drunk and driving alone is disconcertingly common among British doctors and nurses, and there are few support structures to help address the problem, an investigation said Monday.

Over the past decade about 750 clinical and medical staff were formally disciplined for offenses involving alcohol or drugs or work, according to figures obtained by BBC television.

Dr Michael Wilks, chair of the British Medical Association's ethics committee, told a BBC newsprogram that a sense of denial in the medical profession meant it was very hard for alcoholic doctors to be helped.

"With a family history, stress, more and more set up a program that could intervene effectively, most people to buy in the right treatment and set up a monitoring system," he said.

According to the television program—called "Real Life: In Their Hands"—being broadcast later Monday the problem is compounded by a lack of clear guidelines over drinking by medical staff.

Whereas other professions such as airline pilots and train drivers were obliged to stick to strict rules about not drinking before shifts, virtually no hospitals gave similar advice to doctors, nurses and other staff.

A survey of a third of all Britain's hospital governing bodies showed that just one issued guidelines, telling staff they should not drink up to eight hours before they were on duty and not to self-medicate. AFP

Kuwait names first woman minister

MUBARAK

KUWAIT — Kuwait named its first woman cabinet minister on Monday, less than a month after giving women the vote, a key plank in its democratic reforms.

Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Jaber al-Sabah announced rights activist Massouma al-Mubarak's appointment as planning minister and minister of state for administrative development affairs. She takes up the two portfolios in the new government, Sheikh Sabah said.

Mubarak, a 37-year-old economist and political science professor at Kuwait University, said she was honored to be the first woman minister in the Gulf Arab state's history.

"My appointment as the first Kuwaiti female minister welcome that Kuwaiti women have the capabilities that allow them to occupy various positions," she said.

Mubarak becomes the only member of the minority Shiite Muslim community in the 16-member Cabinet. Filling a post left by the resignation of the information minister several months ago, the eighteen Sheikh Ahmad al-Abdullah al-Sabah.

Qatar became the first country in the conservative Gulf Arab region to name a woman cabinet minister in 2003, and most other states in the area have since followed suit.

There have been women MPs or ministers for years in free-thinking Muslim Eastern nations such as Lebanon and Egypt.

Sheikh Ahmad replaced Ali Al-Baghli as communications minister and was also given the health ministry portfolio.

Energy Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah al-Sabah had been interim health minister since Mohammad al-Jarallah resigned in April after parliament members called for a no-confidence vote, accusing him of squandering public funds and mismanagement. — Reuters

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Voice of reason

IT'S good that the voice of calm and sobriety prevailed last Saturday. Who knows, a demagogue's folly, an ugly incident could have sparked tumultuous and violent demonstrations, probably even something like the "Edsa Tres" of May 2001. But the voice of reason and prudence prevailed, and a potential powder keg was defused—at least for the time being.

EDITORIALS

Susan Roces, widow of Fernando Poe Jr., should be commended for her sober and sobering statesmanship. A more successful, opportunistic personality could have roused the people to fury and could have led them to storming the gates of Malacañang. But Roces, who has always been a class act by herself, did nothing of the sort. She instead sounded a call for calmness in the midst of all the political turmoil.

Unlike some politicians who would exploit recent developments for their own advancement or their group's gain, she instead thought of the interest of the nation. She said, "No, we should not do a thing that would only add to our problems as a people." But she did not rule out the need to seek redress or to penalize the guilty should the authenticity of the controversial tape and the identities of the people whose voices are recorded on it be established. She said, "Any step we will take will be in accordance with the law."

Justice. The late Poe knows. This is all she is asking for. "Due treatment under the law." Fair treatment for both the accused, if there will be one or some after the authenticity of the tape is established, and the aggrieved party. But the aggrieved party here, assuming that the tape is authentic, is not just the late actor or Roces or the opposition. It is the Filipino voters whose will as expressed in the 2004 presidential election has to be ascertained and upheld with finality.

Roces was realistic enough to realize that her husband could not be used by the opposition as some sort of modern-day El Cid. Legend has it that the body of El Cid (the military leader Rodrigo Diaz de Vivar) was strapped to his horse after he died. Capacitated in shining armor, the dead El Cid then rode at the head of the Castilian forces that routed their Muslim enemies. "This is not about the elections. My candidate is dead already," Roces said. No, Poe is not going to be a Filipino "El Cid."

Roces, who has been considered by some political leaders as a possible rallying point for the opposition, also said, "We won't get anything out of this. This is not a device to be in power. Power over what?" A more ambitious, power-hungry woman would have jumped at the opportunity to lead a move to destabilize the Arroyo administration and possibly become the power behind the throne. Poe actually scoops it.

Legal options

Susan Roces has indicated that she wants a peaceful, lawful resolution of the issue. The first thing to be done, of course, is to establish the authenticity of the tape and identify the people whose voices are recorded in it. If the voices of President Macapagal Arroyo and Comelec Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano are finally identified and authenticated, then the law should take its course. Both of them could be asked to resign. Or if they refuse to resign, they could be impeached.

But it is said that the opposition in both houses of Congress do not have the numbers to impeach and or even to hold an impeachment trial, in the case of the President. This could force the leaders of the anti-Arroyo bloc to consider other, extra-legal and extra-constitutional options, some of which are not pleasant to contemplate.

We hope, whatever happens this week or next, that the voice of reason and sobriety will prevail. There are legal, constitutional and peaceful options that can be availed of to resolve the issue. Roces has set a laudable example by dealing with the potentially explosive issue. Other leaders of the opposition should follow her example and think very carefully before saying or doing anything that could plunge the nation into a conflict from which it may take years to recover.

'Not a stone upon a stone'

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

BY BE-ELECTION, the Comelec was gutted by shared hot potatoes outdone with a rare second chance to repair the damage she inflicted on a vital democratic institution," we wrote after that bitter presidential vote. "Her window of opportunity for repentance will not come again."

Now did President Arroyo grasp its value as "an unrepeatable chance"? Or did she squander it?

She supported to the Commission on Elections "the formerly partisan Bernard Bautista and Virgilio Garcillano." Like Batasan's phrase, Garcillano has "disappeared" in its "Garci" caution commercial tape, "this man is not in the business of counting votes, he produces them," Inquirer columnist Randy Davila notes.

"This disappearance is one of many self-serving decisions. The President's spokesmen have said a because-that-remains-wouldn't-swallow Edwardo Gaspang to "Bet Pete" newspaper columnist Chad Justice Hilario Davide. She walked on the same knife. To create many votes, she allegedly bribed Bishop Leopoldo Jaucian Jalandoni, who defects, to get down in Hong Kong. This area obstruction of justice. Justice Senior Presiding Justice Jurado subsequently retired.

The window of opportunity for soldiers had ending to during the Edsa Tres rebellion. "Many things never return," the old proverb says. "the dead arrow, the spoken word, wasted time and missed opportunity."

Can the President restore courts to the body politic like Mr. Aquino did upon assuming office in Edsa I and the communities was scrambling to create their courts.

The President's Sobbiloffer "lacked credibility", says Supreme Diagnosis Archbishop Oscar Cruz. "Her very sufferings...show the people don't believe you."

Archbishop Cruz quotes Sobbiloffer's own epitaph: Lifeless. He People scribbled when Shakespeared Marcos died unlike blessing Cesario and Ninoy Aquino. Instead Joseph Estrada's candidacy. Predictably Macapagal-Arroyo stumbled into the same quagmire when she scrapped a pledge to resign. "No hay que caminar si que vas a caminar," our Dalmasian companion-cop Davis once

about what to use kept their pledge.

Lack of credibility undercut many strike campaigns. Recall pledges Orlan heard on Bistro Boys? Or more and no exclusivity. Like Mont Lax of the song, "Bato pa in them. And they do them."

Senator Biazon did an "unlogging" (summary execution) overhanging him. Double Lacson. Pe pledged. At a BBC interview, that he'd quit if ever tapping charges were proven against him. But that clicked, too.

The unsung public has been largely "beaten up sounding on a storm of bravery." Many statements are in Pampanga's fine ages. Public cops and soldiers have been found on summons from evidence credible, Garcia Drainage" call PCBank who personally saw Ping sign as Jose Velarde, names him from's Mar Calamero. "But Sander Cruz is a respected and painstaking police officer."

This vacuum in believability explains why the June 12 rallies ordered. And business leaders have taken full page ads to warn that protracted uncertainty pushes only real estates for ordinary businesses.

"Leaders are custodians of a nation's ideals, of the nation's ideations, of its permanent hopes, of the built edifice/nation a nation out of century (groups) of individuals," columnist Nilda Lippincott points out.

She noted that such custodians is an opposite "needs unguided by failure." Their weaknesses are one of the President's remaining strengths.

Is the opposition's desperate rumpling bought through? Or will the Velarde's Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile of digging bones from a tomb be resisted by Interior Minister Leander Aguilar Pimentel of wielded shotgun-pronation. Sen. Edgardo Angara, Marcos legal wizards, can't research Public Lawyer.

Alternatives

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

least when Erap cried during the height of adversity, "I will not quit, damit, I am the duly elected president of this country!" his foes would only shake their heads sadly and wonder at the integrity of it. When GMA cries the same thing today, everyone can only laugh his head off and marvel at the transparency of the hypocrisy. It betrayed the public trust, GMA never had the public cause to begin with.

How in God's name can you get worse than that?

Of course, GMA's supporters keep repeating like a mantra in the line that's supposed to intervene and prevent guilty that, in repeat, that pursuit, people in power—GMA may not go to jail until she is no more power. It does not mean she may not summon to make matters prevent guilty. To do that, Erap has not been prevented from going to jail. He's ongoing trial in court. And he languishes in jail while at that, unable to make bail, scandalously to engage all this country's leaders of their collective ruin. But he can't need him just the same as being able to rule. GMA is not free, she is more.

The prospect—or threat—of De Castro taking over is not as comfortable as it sounds. The solution is some elections. The financial chairmanship in which it takes to throw after times the country's control of the country's power, elected executive, is ridiculous. It is far more cost-effective than keeping a leader who can't lead, having him years right on. In those dire times, what the country cannot afford is an executive, as many agencies, paralyzed. This country cannot survive four more years of stasis. Or more than months, six months tops.

There's more than moral force to cancel coup attempts, there's legal force too. If it's

discretion of the Ilocos crimes chamber, the Military Intelligence Security Group.

Under the Cabinets Bishop Desposito Bigaze south but their position be hijacked by drive-calling for another people's revolt of a minute uprising. Another more constructed voice: "Kailan ba tayo di nag-coup sa mga nauna?" he says.

But precipitate is the handpersonal. "Who, he wonders, the Fire Gentlemen," some intended to grab control to MOA (Chief National Dag Hagad) patently illegal says. "Your loss, my gain." is as a book. "Filipino men may read strange matters," says Machiavelli aide Indian Bonvicini wonder.

That reaction is wrong. It's not logical. But some her risks a public that people don't see moment unpopular—and that's the problem.

Here are watched the point of no return, Archbishop Cruz asserts. "Once one begins to explain credibility."

Maybe. But phrases-ups and salad handling will not be a substitute for the upheaval' democratic. Only death will convince a cornered people. "He who destroys but acts not breeds pestilence," wrote William Blake.

To survive, the President must jump-start economic growth. Only then can she restore and establish stability. But since empower citizens to bear of the storms beating at her heels. And government must be radically improved by cutting evaporation and holding people accountable. Otherwise, she will be a lame duck.

"I can wave my husband not to fall asleep on a public platform," Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher once said. "But I wouldn't chop his hands or the right plants."

If the President's concerned then family members just dozed or slapped on cue, that'd be a small start. But there's no guarantee this will head off an impeachment bid.

"You did not recognize the state of statesmen," Sen. Theodore Bruno Sabbiloffer. So, as you, "not a stone will be left upon a stone."

Marcos and Estrada forgot this warning. But before making it too President Arroyo remembered—finally?

Pinoy drama

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

JUST as people were starting to relax a bit after a month-long weekend that yielded such stories of disenfranchisement that didn't materialize, this week had to commence with high drama itself. Arlene Calvo, wife of Sgt. Vidal Doble of the Intelligence Service of the AFP (somehow nobody makes that the full Mr. Name of Independence Day for Manila to "rescue" her husband who had been abducted. She claimed that he called to his possibly scanning and influential wife and uttered two messages begging her to help him escape from San Carlos Seminary where he was being held against his will. Arlene also declared that her husband told her that the group of Samuel Ong was going to make him talk to the media about the "Hello Garci" tape. In the message, ang ibig sabihin nun ay connection between President Arroyo and Comelec Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano, which is supposedly did not want to do.

As this column was being written, the media were trying to reach Bobby Ilarmeal as well as the authorities of San Carlos Seminary to ascertain his side of the story. This latest scenario especially vis-à-vis the military establishment could be very serious. Doble could be a Trojan horse to his side. Although legal means, blaming that form might be used, if necessary. The Ong group ought to discredit Bobby's side, by suggesting that that the one we're talking about is not Bobby Ilarmeal at all but some other fellow who was taken and pulled to the seminary.

As I followed the hearings over the radio while driving around in the "Peace area" of acting a frantic one-man traffic enforcer, I was glad that I had decided to stay home. I wanted to expand the Doble or credible not just because she was a nanny, but because government people are simply too dirty and incompetent to be trusted. Besides, the Ong group's credibility is still that early well, and the Doble story contained basic flaws in the prosecution strategy for allegations.

But the Doble affair has other holes in the story of National Ong, and he should give a good explanation for them. Why was Doble's wife not informed and the nagging thought that the episode could have been staged-managed by the government.

Even what Bobby and Arlene Ilarmeal said in their interviews with the media were not consistent. Arlene said

An inspiring story amid news about gloom

EVERY DAY when you read the newspapers, the Philippine Daily Inquirer included, you find three pages dominated by stories on poverty, poverty, corruption, crime, politicking, scandals, etc. It seems nothing is newsworthy unless it falls under the above categories. This leaves us, readers, with a sense of despair and gloom, and we become so sick ourselves. Is there hope for our country?

The other question we ask is: Is media being responsible, feeding us a daily dosage of gloom and doom and making matters worse?

But, perhaps, there is hope. The Inquirer, out of the blue, from page 1 on June 8 treats us inspiring and heartwarming story about an aged Japanese in Davao, who despite his meager income, is feeding pregnant sows (292 to date) poor students, who otherwise could not only raise a dog to have at least a second meal for the day. His compassion and the compassionate response he got from ordinary townsfolk in his small community amazed the soldier of my heart and, I am sure, also the hearts of many other people who read the article. We must made my day. The Philippines is not such a bad place, after all, despite the gloom-and-doom news dominating the dailies.

In further news of the TELecoms, "Bolstered Metro, Pantaleon Alonso," said the most responsible line of conduct to the public. I suggest that that PLC publish every day an inspiring story or even boys page. There is a lack of heroic characters in the Philippine landscape these days. And these stories need to be told to inspire us to a second and give us a sense of direction which leads our government and, to some extent, our Church have not given. I suspect that the Internet give the same impression to their customers as you do to the constitution, corruption and disintegration of political and public officials.

Perhaps, for short example, we still have to do and for the best of our patience in life, and to be less dependent on government and to operate for our well being. Once this happens, then, indeed, this nation can be given—again.

—ARNELL I. DE [illegible]
San Antonio Heights
Sta. Rosa, Batangas

Ps. we always look for positive stories. Please look especially to our "positive Sunday" issues.—Ed.

Right colors and materials for flag

MANUEL Quezon III should check with the National Historical Institute the color references used in the manufacture of the Philippine flag. I remember time when I was in the height of the Marcos martial law days, possessing a copy of the old reference book was a penalty.

Also, before flag manufacturers are allowed to supply flags to the government or private institutions, the Department of Education, like schools and the military, they are required under RR regulations to submit samples of their finished flag. NHI will measure and mark their stamp of approval on the flag. Recently flag samples have undermining to the flag specifications were not submitted to the flag committee secretariat.

All flag manufacturers are informed that above the sample of the color they should follow in the manufacture of flags. But many of them more on using nationalized materials for obvious reasons. To induce the purchase cost of materials for making flags, I suggested that to flag manufacturers that they post their resources and nominate a trade manufacturers which could produce and supply the proper and necessary materials in bulk, instead of by yards or meters. But flag manufacturers do not want this assignments because they think that using the same kind of materials will mean cost, protests.

—RENATO FERRON
Bonane Road,
Homeowners and Brodditry Division, SAE
rmperdon@hotmail.com

DA moving to increase rice yield

MS assures grassroots in the hinterlands and Bicol Bicol Center for her heroic relief. Beyond rice policy and hunger. (PBL 6/14/05)

The government recognizes the overwhelming importance of hunger, especially in the rural areas, where food production is centered.

To overcome this, the Department of Agriculture has intensified the implementation of Sustaining Mangalong the (SMA) to improve commodities, in our case the GMA Rice Program. Our program aims to increase 15.12 million tons of palay and to modify increase yield by 5 percent annually.

Planting of hybrid rice is being pushed by the program, as it has proven to impart higher yields per hectare, resistance to pests, more cost-saving in production and increasing farmer income.

To encourage the planting of hybrid rice, the program gives subsidy for seeds and fertilizer assistance. It also conducts various trainings and, in cooperation with private seed companies and local government units, establishes technology demonstration areas.

The program, however, also has assistance to be achieved in the areas.

The Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice) makes it more to embrace the productivity of rice farms through the planting of vegetables and other cash crops.

Moreover, balanced fertilization campaign with the aid of Leaf Color Chart (LCC) and Minus-One Element Technique (MOET) were developed to increase efficiency use of fertilizers and to reduce production cost attributable to fertilization.

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) strategies were developed to reduce pesticide application and promote ecological soundness in the agricultural system.

Credit assistance is also available from the Quedan and Rural Credit Guarantee Corp. (Quedancor) bank for hybrid and inbred rice farmers.

Thus, while the program focuses on hybrid rice farmers, it also looks after the interests of farmers planting inbred and home-saved seeds.

I thank you for giving me the opportunity to shed light on the matter. The GMA Rice Program is the government's commitment working with the media in upholding farmer interest and in strengthening the agriculture sector.

—BERCILIO M. SALAZAR, director,
GMA Rice Program,
Department of Agriculture,
Elliptical Road, Diliman, Quezon City

English will destroy Philippine society

IN MY opinion, the proposal in Congress to adopt the English language in the teachings of most subjects in the elementary level is a move to preach conservative lawmakers does is calculated to destroy Philippine society. This is a very selfish and unethical maneuver. I am calling all genuine Filipinos—lawmakers, government officials and the entire citizenry, to oppose language movement. I am very much against the proposal because it will destroy our culture and our language. We should be Filipinos first before we can be proud to be citizens. I just can't understand all the implications this matter may bring to the end in the future. I just can't that they are forgiven for they do not know what they are doing. I am just wondering, did their professors in college had to teach them. "Isang pasyenteng lalo, ginagamot ng lalo" Please don't pass and perpetuate to the future generations Filipinos the misdemeanor that you are to pass now. Parang ano na nangyari (Here and?)

—JONATHAN C. APULIN, MAJLADAS
president,
PEP History Society,
PEP Sta. Mesa, Manila

Singing the national anthem with pride

HOW we sing our national anthem will say about our culture and identity. Some do not know the meanings of the words. Some do not know the tune of the music. Some do not know the rules, but because they are proud of their country, is reverently singing anthem, has rendered into one of the most prosperous countries in the world.

—EZEKIEL MEDELLA
alfredo.medella@reddi.org

Audit the coco levy funds

THE SEPARATE Presidential Executive Audit Commission (PEAC) has been tasked by the Supreme Court to audit the coco levy funds. We urge Congress to include in its investigations into the possibility that certain officials of the third Republic (1946-1972) misused the funds, which are already being close to compromise the funds. It is the deliberate lack of transparency on the coco levy funds indeed intended to set the stage for the eventual misuse of the funds and misappropriation and Standing Collateral?

We in the Alliance Peasant Council believe that all the cocos owned according the coco levy funds will be an independent audit of the funds and the full implementation of the coconut farmers who bore the levy/taxation during the Marcos dictatorship and cost the estimated P100-billion coco levy funds. We also call on the Sandiganbayan and the Supreme Court to expedite the legal resolution of the coco levy cases that are under their respective jurisdictions, for the respect of their decisions be overthrown by the administration and subservient of the other administrations that made.

—ATTY. ANTONIO CLARION, secretary-gen.
Alliance Peasant Council,
211 Matahimik St.,
Teachers Village, Quezon City

Recycled politicians and cost of recovering ill-gotten wealth

LOOK how many more the voters of France receiving "No" to what they believed was contrary to their personal interest.

Whereas, we, the people of the Philippines, elect the so called very clever politicians to allow them to create confusion and disunity in a manner befitting to serve of many. His example, in the impeachment trial of Joseph Estrada, when he was still the President, he was not in any position to grant clemency much as a deny specifically because of the impending election there. But now he goes to be buried, pretending to be a knight in shining armor, the guardians of democracy.

Why? And why can't the government be more decisive. If Estrada is guilty, then his loot be confiscated, twice illegally gained, let him go. The world will be heard about spending millions of pesos of taxpayers' money to keep him comfortable in jail. Other taxpayers more concerns than Estrada are languishing in jail not for any criminal misdemeanor. Where is justice here?

How much money has the government invested from Estrada? From the time he was ousted from power to the present time spent in filing and pursuing all the cases against these people? Are we ahead or are we in the losing end whether in monetary sense or in the sense of justice? How many more billions have and many expenses regarding these expenditures? The sense makes sense.

The leaders of this nation have a fallacious relationship with the people. They are shielded and accountable to them in the highest degree.

—RENE HERNANDEZ
hrd@compass.com.ph

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Inquirer

What do you think should be done to spare top government and police officials accused of receiving huge amounts of jueteng money?

If guilty of receiving jueteng money, top government officials should be put in military officials should be put in Fort Bonifacio instead of a jail.

—Felix Reyes, 51, fishing city

Bringing her to trial if it found guilty, then they are of Camelot & all kind of angels to throw other [illegible] at them.

—Mike Ebora, 29, Angeles City

Let them suffer through their own conscience and karma. Divine punishment is certain.

—Elmer Rueda, 36, [illegible]

[illegible] playbook. Keep making huge [illegible]. Advice to [illegible]. Share it with us. I don't know if it can't [illegible] [illegible]

—[illegible], 25, [illegible]

They should be put on preventive imprisonment and the investigated if they

—[illegible] [illegible], 36, [illegible] [illegible]

[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [

Across the NATION

SUPER BRAND PLATINUM 2004
SUPER BRAND GOLD 2003
SUPER BRAND GOLD 2002
SUPER BRAND GOLD 2001
SUPER BRAND GOLD 2000
SUPER BRAND GOLD 1999

Govern from Cebu, GMA urged

By Jhunnex Napallacan
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—"Come home to Cebu and govern the Philippines from Cebu."

Former Gov. Pablo Garcia extended this invitation to embattled President Macapagal-Arroyo during a "unity rally" yesterday afternoon at the Capitol grounds.

Garcia pointed out that the crowd of 20,000, as well as the attendance of most local officials, only showed that Mr Arroyo still enjoyed the support and commitment of the Cebuanos.

He recalled that the Arroyos took her oath as the country's 14th president on June 30, 2004 on the Capitol grounds because the Cebuanos gave her a winning majority of over one million votes.

Garcia, father of incumbent Gov. Gwendolyn Garcia, said the Cebuanos should not allow the opposition in Manila to succeed in their plan to bring down the duly-elected administration as the President could fulfill her promises to move the people until 2010.

"This is what I will tell Sister, if you people in Manila will continue to rally against the President's, Madam President, you come to Cebu. It seems Malacañang's Cebu City," said Garcia, who also served as three-term congressman.

"If you people in Manila will not stop demonstrating (against Mr. Arroyo), we will invite the President to Cebu, make house in Cebu, Madam President - Cebu is your house. We Cebuanos love you. We Cebuanos will protect you here in Cebu," he added.

Among those who attended the two-hour rally were three congressmen, 42 of the 52 town and city mayors, board members, vice mayors, congressional and city councilors and barangay chairs.

Even elected officials from the Sin Silang town, like Bandiermiran, Barrozo and Santander, came to show their support for the President.

Mayors Tomas Osmeña of Cebu, Soorman Bernardos of Talisay, Thadeo Gimena of Minglanilla and Samson Ben Dominic III of Danao were also at the rally but did not deliver any speech.

Governor Garcia, for her part, relayed her father's message, stating the Cebuanos would not allow those involved in the alleged destabilization plot to succeed in their plan to oust the President.

"Cebu is solidly behind the President. We are not only No. 1 province in the country for nothing, Cebu is No. 1 because we Cebuanos are one," she said.

Aside from the two Garcias, Representatives Raul del Mar of Cebu City's 4th District, Antonio Cuenco of the South District and Raul Daza of Cebu's 6th district delivered separate speeches.

Woman pleads for justice for daughter

By Antolihao Roque
PDI Central Luzon Desk

SCIENCE CITY OF MUÑOZ—A 48-year-old woman from Balanga City has pleaded to authorities to arrest the murderer of her 13-year-old daughter here.

Lerma de la Cruz said her daughter, Aileen Bello, 13, was bundled up in duty warmers to a vacant lot with 22 club wounds in different parts of the body.

She said Aileen was influenced by the friends to enroll at the Central Luzon State University here to experience a course in petroleum technology.

Aileen was in third year of the four-year Bachelor of Science in Animal Husbandry (BSAH), a required course before the third two years leading to the Doctor of Veterinary Science and Medicine.

At least student when she graduated in high school in Bataan, Aileen was valedictorian in the CLSU. She pursued the course in keeping with the desire of her father, who finished a BSAH course in a Metro Manila university. Her father works in Dubai, the United Arab Emirates.

"Talunggo po ninyo kaming mahanap ng katarungan ang aking anak (Please help us give justice to the death of our daughter)," Lerma said in Bisaya in the telephone interview with the police chief here.

Mahirapang, sa tuwing ako ay pupunta sa kanyang puntod ay nagkakapanic ako sa aming anak. I wish your cooperation will further you to find you will surrender and rest up the murderer."

Aileen was the eldest and only girl among four children of the Ilocos couple.

Supt. Jovero Espinoli, police chief here, said Aileen was stabbed with an ice pick seven times in the neck, three on the chest, and 11 in the back.

There was no more struggle as observed by the police since she succumbed to all the 22 wounds she had sustained, Espinoli said.

He said Aileen went out of her house at 9:30 p.m. on Thursday, supposedly to buy school supplies at the time, she was not yet missed by her parents after attending a meeting of their Radio Club on campus, 300 meters from their boarding house.

Her cellphone and wallet were missing.

Espinoli said Aileen went out of the house at 9:30 p.m. on Thursday, supposedly to buy school supplies at the time, she was not yet missed by her parents after attending a meeting of their Radio Club on campus, 300 meters from their boarding house.

SCARE CROW
Jessica Lois, a 73-year-old grandmother, guards a terraced rice field in Gardos, Tobias in the Caribbean, using a clog that is 12m away birds.

Korean's disappearance baffles Cavite cops

GAMU TICENTE LIM, Laguna—Police are still clueless over the sudden disappearance of a Korean businessman in Carmelray since he was reported missing since Friday.

Senior Supt. Aurelio Feliel, acting provincial chief of the Calabarzon police, said yesterday that Gook Hee Kim, 50, a Korean residing in Bulacan, Guangsanol, Tanay, Cavite, was expected missing on the day he was supposed to meet his Korean business partners in Tower Mansion, Ortigas.

Feliel said the disappearance of Gook was first reported by his boss in person, identified as Hailey Yoshio, 27, to the Tanay police on Friday night.

He said Yoshio told police that a few hours before the Korean were missing, she heard the victim talking with somebody on his mobile phone in Korean.

Yoshio also said that the victim told her that he was to meet with his business partners later that day.

"Before his disappearance, Mr. Gook brought (Yoshio) to her school in Bonanza town and dropped her mother in nearby Novaliches town on board his Honda car (VAE-801). That was the last time they saw him alive," Feliel said.

At around 5 p.m., Yoshio reports, only called up the victim and asked him if he could fetch her from school.

But the victim told her that he was still busy meeting with his Korean friends, Feliel said.

Three hours after, Yoshio again phoned the victim, but his cell phone was turned off, thereby Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Women warned of illegal recruiters

GUIMARAS CITY—The Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) yesterday warned women applicants for overseas employment against what it said was the proliferation of illegal recruiters in Eastern Visayas.

Abdulgani Umog, OWWA director, said on Friday that women posing victims often end up being sexually abused or becoming unpaid maids in the countries they are recruited.

He said his office often received complaints from parents and husbands about unregistered or misrecruited women recruits who were brought to Metro Manila. He did not provide any figures.

Umog advised applicants to always seek second opinion from the OWWA on job placements in their respective countries to avoid being victims or mere manpower.

A check with the OWWA, Umog said, could determine whether people in doing them with job promises were actually hired by law firms in Metro Manila.

Girl dies of meningo in Pampanga

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—A year-old girl died of suspected meningococcemia at a private hospital in this city on Saturday, a Department of Health official said.

Dr. Ric Magpantay, DOH assistant regional director, said the girl, of Mexico town, died a few minutes after she was rushed to the hospital at about 8 a.m. Saturday.

Magpantay said the DOH took blood samples from the girl to confirm the presence of the bacteria causing the fatal meningococcemia.

Personnel at the private hospital who had close contact with the girl were given antibiotics to strengthen their immune system.

The girl's relatives were also given medicine, Magpantay said.

Pamela Pamma, PDI Central Luzon Bureau

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Museum hides original flag for 'security'

By Vincent Cabreza
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—For the first time since the Philippine Independence ceremonial on June 12, 1898, custodians of the country's original flag kept it out of the public eye on Sunday, citing security concerns.

Precious Alonzo, curator of the Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo Museum here, unrolled a restored flag, measuring six feet long and beginning a tour that bears a mythical lure.

Heirs of Aguinaldo kept the flag in their custody after discovering it under the heirs's deathbed. They have maintained that this is the flag that their great grandfather unfurled on June 12, 1898 in Kawit, Cavite, when he declared Philippine independence.

Government historians were exhibited legislative hearings, and to date, the flag has been considered more as an artifact rather than a national relic.

Claims

But since a Filipino-American claimed that a US museum had the original flag, the Aguinaldo family has intensified efforts to reclaim the relic, said lawyer Cheloy Velasquez, corporate secretary of the Emilio Aguinaldo-Legacy Foundation Inc., which runs the museum.

"There's a possibility the government can claim ownership of the relic, now that the National Historical Institute (NHI) has declared that the San Francisco flag is not the original flag," said Aquino, a former Baguio representative.

He was referring to a custard cloth flag that Filipino-American Rudy Asensio discovered at the San Francisco War Memorial in February.

Asensio, a member of the war memorial council, was convinced of the flag's authenticity noting that American Gen. Frederick Funston might have confiscated it in 1902 at the height of the Philippine-American war.

The flag that was unveiled in 2898 was declared missing between 1960 and 1969, after the American government prohibited the display of the Philippine flag, according to Aguinaldo's museum documents.

Locking

But Aquino said the San Francisco flag lacked some crucial details—the mythological sun god.

Aquino said too many details found in historical records disproved Asensio's research, while supporting the Aguinaldo family's claims that it was holding the genuine article.

Historians are divided over the flag's chronologies.

The flag being kept here is made of two layers of silk and cotton, which are woven together by golden thread. The colors represent the peace (blue) and war (red) era by design from the contemporary flag.

It also has golden inscriptions running on the paste side: Fortuna Inquilinarum del Sol Sus Ab Oriente.

Aguinaldo's heirs claimed that the inscriptions were inspired by the French Revolution, which featured Greek pastel personifications.

Every year since 1998, the flag has been put in a chiefly in control of the museum.

Professional conservationists hired by Aguinaldo's present grandson, Emilio Aguinaldo Santos III, in 1999 and 2000 provided the family detailed guidelines to preserve the relic, including room exposure to direct sunlight or strong artificial lights.

Aquino said the flag might possible taken touched, soon, pulling the family to finally avail the relic to a humidity-controlled room.

What the heavens but now the flag, its silk fabric was found to need repair. Only a protective net was keeping it together.

Interest

Interest in the flag brought the curious to the museum in 1998 when the museum received interest in the relic, that was then declined by only four people by June 12, 2005.

Aquino said he neared the museum on Sunday to discover that nobody visited the gallery room, where a replica of Aguinaldo's flag is on display.

The only bright point of the flag's entry to date the figurehead. Its flag has finally gotten some respect.

The city government celebrated National Flag Day on May 28 at the museum, to acknowledge the contributions of the legendary flag.

"This is the first and only time a government entity has recognized that we have the genuine first flag," Aquino said.

THE ORIGINAL flag at the Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo Museum in Baguio City.

ROUNDUP

Village exec kills self

LUBAO, Pampanga—A village official committed suicide allegedly using a revolver he no longer owned his wife's shotgun, Guyabi Lubao, 37, barangay councilor of Poblacion 1, was found by relatives hanging in the toilet's room on Saturday. The wife, an employee of the Department of Agriculture in Lubao, said. The woman said her husband was depressed that his wife had been suspended by the city. The police's wife refused to comment on the case. Police said the case is under investigation.

Charlie C. Galvez, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Balik Minders launched

DAVAO—The Minders officials yesterday pushed through with their "Balik Minders" project, which aims to transform their constituents into active distributors and an investment haven for Mindanao that will make the numerous contacts of Mindanao's overseas workers in other countries. The project components have also reportedly considered a proposal to put up a permanent haven not only for Mindanaoans, but also for Manila-based businessmen. The project is being managed by Mayor Rodrigo Duterte, who has also ordered the city Mrs. Rosalina C. Jaworski and the Commission on peace and order situation in the province also helped promote the investment, including the preservation of the vast forests on Mount Apo. Governor Jesus Sacdalan, Police Provincial Director Pedro Pabalan and other officials during the launching of the project.

Grenade suspect nabbed

DUMAGUETE CITY—Police have arrested on Thursday evening a woman, who was identified as behind the grenade attack on a police station here that injured about a dozen people. Senior Insp. Harrison Obaldo, police provincial commander, said Vivian Rose Lopez, was taken before the Mindanao and was arrested. Medina was the suspect of an armed entry after witnesses saw her leaving the scene of the attack. She was also found with hand and also found a their homes, sending explosives.

Charlie C. Galvez, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Marijuana destroyed

CEBU CITY—Narcotics agents today exhibited and policemen uprooted some 23,000 fully grown marijuana plants worth P8.5 million in Barangay Pinamgayan in Minglanilla, Magistrate Jesus, during an early morning raid in Minglanilla, Senior Supt. Jane Antonette Bacoy, director of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, said the land was the biggest in the region in recent months. Bacoy said they identified Ernesto Tomanan as the owner of the ground. Tomanan is still at large. Bacoy said the marijuana plants were in the land which could be way to the cities of Cebu, Dapayan de Oro and General Santos, and the provinces of South Cotabato and Sarangani.

Charlie C. Galvez, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Antimalaria budget less than 5¢ per Filipino, says solon

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY—A Filipino only gets less than five centavos for malaria prevention and control.

Rep. Antonio Alvarez (Palawan, 1st district) said the measly amount could be the reason for widespread ignorance of the cause of deaths of three-quarters who documented a malaria case in Rizal, Palawan.

Reprint Angel and Arnold Tabuti, producer and cameraman of a national TV show, did not conduct studies, which they might have contracted while doing a documentary about the rain-dwelling community of Tau't Batu.

The third member of the team, Palawan-based dwell, stringer and freelancer Jesus Christian Macaraeg, died from cerebral organ failure as a result of septicemia at a private hospital here.

The budget for malaria prevention and control is only 19.6 million for the year as stated in the General Appropriations Act, said Alvarez.

"If we are going to divide the budget for the whole population in the country, the government is only willing to spend 5 centavos for every Filipino," Alvarez said.

There are around 300,000 victims of malaria everyday according to Alvarez, quoting statistics from the Department of Health.

"This means 25¢ for every person."

A malaria patient needs at least P1,000 just for medicines, doctor's fees and hospitalization a bill not included, according to Palawan based Ellanee Ligon Malaria (ELM) project director Jim Anglehart.

Unlike other high profile diseases like the Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS), malaria is endemic in only poor countries, Anglehart said.

"Although we admire new campaigning against malaria, like what they're doing with AIDS, we should not forget that this illness ranks 9th in the causes of death among Filipinos," Alvarez said.

He called on the Department of Health and the Department of Budget and Management to lobby with Congress for a bigger budget for malaria control.

He also urged nongovernment groups and the private sector to help ease out the lack of budget.

Palawan so far has the most synergistic way of combating malaria in the country through the community-based ELM, a sustainable malaria prevention and control program being funded by the Shell Philippines Exploration BV (Spex), sponsor of the Malampaya Project and the province-led government. *—Isabelle F. Sinsay, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Armed 'lumad' group relents to entry of mining for jobs, houses

MANAGE (Davao Oriental)—Armed Manobos people who had been opposing the entry of large-scale mining companies into their gold-rich village had a change of heart to exchange for new housing, electricity and employment.

Boniface Mananggog identifies of the Manobos in the province, said his people and their armed warriors would no longer fight the mining firms after a recent dialogue with company executives.

"I told them (mining firms) to be true to their promises or the natives will rise up against them," Mananggog said.

He said at least 15,000 Manobos in the Mananggog Tagauayo would directly benefit from the operation of at least two mining companies.

"We have no choice but to let them use our villages simply because of poverty. While we would to protect our ancestral lands from ecologically destructive activities like mining, we also need to survive from the worsening economic condition in the country," he said.

Manobos tribal warriors, armed with "bolobong" or homemade shotguns, earlier vowed to block large-scale mining firms from entering their villages. Some of them even vowed to kill small-scale mining.

Lowell Pelayo, provincial mining engineer, said the gold mining operations of the natives had to stop after several hostels ceased it.

"Their mining method is destructive to the ecology. The small-scale miners are digging towards just anywhere," Pelayo said.

Gov. Maria Elena Palma Gil, herself a Manobo, recently declared a moratorium on gold mining in the province after the more than 10,000 small-scale miners in the newly found gold rush area in Tagauayo were operating without mining permits from the provincial government. *—Reinhard O. Zozomela, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

DA sees bright prospects for upland veggies

By Delmar Carlos
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

LA TRINIDAD, Benguet—The Department of Agriculture is encouraging farmers in the province to start packing their vegetables properly and avoid duplication of the benefits of expanding markets under the department's two main marketing strategies: "Harabang Pilipinas" and "Bili Gulay."

Francisco Ramos, director of the DA's agribusiness and marketing assistance service, said the farms of highland vegetables, like cabbages, potatoes and carrots, must begin to use the new programs since farmers would soon directly transact with their fellow Manila buyers.

Speaking before farmers who attended the Benguet Farmers Summit at the provincial capitol last week Friday, Ramos said the new programs were designed to widen the local farmers' market connections in the metropolis and eliminate price manipulations by middlemen.

Markets, which patronize farm products, including vegetables, directly from producers under affordable prices, are given incentives to become members of the "Harabang Pilipinas," Ramos said.

"Bili Gulay" is a DA-initiated initiative of selling packed and ready to cook vegetable combinations for everyday Filipino dishes, he said.

The farmers welcomed the programs that were dispatched about how the DA would implement them in view of the absence of clearly tasked with overseeing the link between them and the markets.

"The programs are okay," Jose Bacdan, president of the Benguet Farmers Federation, said. "But the DA must move to it fast. Chaos will really be made already traversed the highland vegetables to model and taps in talking with market administrators."

Under the programs, the farmers are already assured of a steady demand for their products under a social pricing system that aims to stabilize prices, Ramos said.

He said the province's farmers could now negotiate to sell their products to the private and the public markets to the metropolis which are the central members of the "Harabang Pilipinas."

He identified the public markets as Dagupan market in Manila, Marikina public market, Marcos ng Pasig market in Pasig City, Pandiflang Langgood ng Mandaluyong City, and the Muntinglupa market in Bicutan, Santa City.

The private markets are Dau's market in Pandacan City, Concepcion market and People's market in Marikina, and Farmer's and Women markets in Quezon City.

Twenty other markets are being tapped. Fifteen of them have said they are willing to accommodate highland vegetables, Ramos said.

Rescued Indons' ordeal recalled

"FOR 98 days, they moved from one island to another, avoiding authorities and any border patrols," Southern Command chief Lt. Gen. Roberto Bacarro said during the presentation of rescued Indonesians Samin Labnao and Indrian Hanapol Sambay.

Bacarro said the victims were moved to the islands of Mindanao, Sibutu, Pangutaran Island, Panduin, Lapak, Manubul and Lugus in Sitangkai and the kidnappers got tired and caught wings with the Abu Sayyaf Group in Jolo.

There was a brief clash during the rescue, according to Col. Dominique Tuason Jr., Southern Command's chief of staff.

"But the kidnappers outgunned for safety, leaving (behind) the Indonesians, who were startled and very afraid," Tuason added.

The Indonesians were kidnapped off Bilao Island in Mandalog, Semporna in Malaysia on March 30.

Bacarro said Labnao and Hanapol claimed that they were separated from their ship-mates Akmad Hamidah, who remains in captivity, when they landed in Sulu last month. *—Julie G. Alipala, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Question of the Week

What do you think should President Gloria Macapagal - Arroyo do in the wake of the jueteng and audio tape recording scandals?

Sendors of at least 20 texts as published in Tuesday's IngBox will each receive an "Inquirer Mug!"

Text your answers to 2367 (Globe) or 384 (Smart).
(Maximum of 160 characters)

Mail to inquirer box
name/age/city/message.
2367 (Globe) or 384 (Smart).
(Maximum of 160 characters)

"Metro Manila residents can call Jam at 8979000. Provincial residents can call 1800-1-8979000. Inquirer will open/approve/encoding address. Rate P7.5 (VAT) per text. prizes will be mailed to them

Japan threatens ban on mangoes from RP

COTABATO CITY—The Japanese government has threatened to ban mangoes from the Philippines, particularly from Mindanao, if Japanese health experts find carcasses alive on the residue on the export of mangoes.

Abunina Abi, chief of the Department of Agriculture in Central Mindanao, on Sunday said Japanese officials in Manila had issued a warning recently to all mango exporters, growers, exporters and distributors against using chlorpyrifos containing pesticides.

Chlorpyrifos is one of the most widely used organophosphate insecticides in the United States. The main uses of chlorpyrifos are in agriculture and non-agricultural settings like homes, office buildings, schools and warehouses.

"The first detection of such residue was in September 2004 and the second detection was in December 2004. The Japanese government had given our country a ban warning to ban our mango exports if excessive chlorpyrifos residues will be detected again in the future," Abi said.

Abi said chlorpyrifos should not be applied on the mango fruit itself, adding it is not supposed for control of ants in mango. *Jeoffrey Maitem, PhilMindanao Bureau*

Solon breaks protocol at Senate

LEGAZPI CITY—It was a case of the family's garment breaking protocol to defend what he said was the family's integrity.

Rep. Luis Villafuerte declared he was watching his statements for enhancement to testify at the Senate but went to deny accusations that he and his son, now Camarines Sur Gov Luis Raymundo Villafuerte, were involved in "jueteng."

The elder Villafuerte cited rumors in the testimony of confessed jueteng lingman Roland Garcia, including his misgivings/actions of terrain and villages in Camarines Sur, in a bid to question Garcia's credibility.

In his testimony, Garcia said the Villafuertes controlled the appointments of police officers in the provinces and Chiefdom, also the appointees of jueteng there.

But Villafuerte said several officers named by Garcia had already denied in radio interviews Garcia's accusation.

He said in a phone interview that he had to go to the Senate "because it is now the entire Villafuerte family that is under attack."

He said in Garcia's testimony there was no mention at all of him or his son or any of the Villafuerte directly receiving jueteng money for protection.

Media, he said, "just added those things up and made that conclusion" although any reference to the Villafuertes directly receiving money from jueteng was denied from Garcia's testimony.

At the Senate hearing, Villafuerte said he quoted extensively from Garcia's testimony because it would prove that Garcia never mentioned anything about the Villafuertes receiving money from jueteng. "It's all insinuation that media took to mean direct accusation," he said.

Villafuerte "Boy" Mayon, a confessed jueteng operator in Albay turned witness, had said jueteng would stop in the entire Philippines, "but never in Camarines Sur."

"I have nothing to hide. I have come to the Senate to protect my family and my family's integrity," said the elder Villafuerte.

He said, the governor, said he is also taking up the subpoena for the family.

"These people find it easy to accuse people of involvement in illegal gambling but proving their accusations by presenting hard evidence that would stand in a court of law is another matter," said the governor in a press statement.

"Why are the charges not being lifted yet, if there was any law violated?" the governor asked.

"This is an injustice for local chief executives... because aside from their reputation being unfairly maligned, they have to reply to accusations that distract them from duties and responsibilities," the governor said. *Joel U. Baconan, PNC Iriga Bureau Luzon Bureau*

UP-PGH Gastroenterology and Cardiology sections receive state-of-the-art equipment

Today marks another milestone for the UP-Philippine General Hospital as the sections of Gastroenterology and Cardiology of the Department of Medicine acquire state-of-the-art equipment. Through the Priority Development Assistance Fund of Senator Juan Ponce Enrile, they have acquired latest in gastrointestinal endoscopic and cardiovascular enhancement technology some within reach of the growing number of patients at the largest tertiary hospital in the country.

The acquisition of these units of the Olympus Endoscopic Video Information System shall promote better and immediate access to appropriate and therapeutic endoscopic procedures that are vital in the management of gastrointestinal and hepatobiliary diseases. The Endoscopic Olympus PEG SIL with the Endoscopic Argon Plasma Coagulation unit, are only two of the few available in the country that allow the effective life saving hemostasis and devitalization of various gastrointestinal pathologies. The Cardiology section will acquire a state-of-the-art portable cardiovascular ultrasound machine to augment its non-invasive cardiovascular diagnostic and also this machine, the section will be able to serve more requests for echocardiogram. Its portability will also allow cardiologists of PGH to perform bedside examinations on admitted patients who are in critical condition. Despite its small size, this cardiovascular ultrasound system maintains and does not sacrifice the full capability and functions of the regular sized machine.

Service to the Filipino has always been the primary goal of PGH. With the addition of these equipment to the diagnostic and therapeutic facilities of the hospital, the patients who are mostly from the lower socio-economic class, can now undergo technologically advanced diagnostic examinations and procedures.

The Section of Gastroenterology

The Section of Gastroenterology of the University of the Philippines and the Philippine General Hospital is proud to be of service to thousands of our less fortunate countrymen. Every year over 7,000 patients go to the Gastrointestinal Clinic (GIC) out-patient and in-patient sections. Our specialized cases: adult medicine pertaining to nutrition, digestive, gastrointestinal, liver, pancreatic and biliary diseases. Our Digestive Endoscopy Unit caters to the largest number of patients daily and offers advanced diagnostic and therapeutic endoscopy with recommended expertise owing to a highly respected and competent staff. Eleven active specialists and six clinical fellows make up the UP-PGH GIC which is multi-awarded both locally and internationally as it paves the way for advances in the field of gastroenterology. Our services include:

- Esophagogastroduodenoscopy (EGD)/Upper Endoscopy
- Colonoscopy/Lower Endoscopy
- Endoscopic Retrograde Cholangiopancreatography (ERCP)
  - Varicose Band Ligation
  - Dilatation Procedures
  - Achalasia, Esophageal Stricture...)
- EGD Guided Nasogastric Tube Insertion
- Colonoscopic Insertion Sclerotherapy
- Percutaneous Endoscopic Gastrostomy Tube Insertion
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- Double Lumen Tumor dilation Therapy
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The Section of Cardiology

Cardiovascular or heart disease is the leading cause of mortality and morbidity in the Philippines. It affects Filipinos in a variety of ways through hypertension, heart attack, stroke, disease, kidney failure and heart failure. It does not spare anyone, young or old, man or woman rich or poor. The Section of Cardiology of UP-PGH is committed to continuously perform its provide role of providing quality cardiovascular health care for Filipinos.

Over 10,000 patients are seen yearly by the section at the out-patient department and in-patient wards, providing various services to meet the ever-growing cardiovascular health care needs of our population. It also offers the following:

General Services:
- General and subspecialty cardiology clinics
- In-patient cardiovascular care including ICU
- Perioperative evaluation and care
- Non-invasive and cardiac surgery
- Arrhythmia management and pacemaker implantation
- Peripheral vascular evaluation and care

Diagnostic Services:
- Coronary angiography and hemodynamic study
- Peripheral vascular angiography
- ECG
- Exercise stress testing
- Echocardiography (resting, exercise, contrast, dobutamine and transesophageal)
- Digital recording for ECG and echo

- Holter monitoring
- Tilt table test
- Pacemaker interrogation and analysis

Interventional Cardiology:
- Coronary angioplasty with or without stenting
- Percutaneous transluminal valvuloplasty
- Commissurotomy
- Percutaneous occlusion of congenital heart defects
- Other non-catheterization therapeutic and permanent pacemaker insertion
- Open heart surgery

PROJECTS SOON TO BE LAUNCHED/INAUGURATED

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MANILA (COTABATO)	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
COTABATO - MANILA	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

*ENJOY MANILA-COTABATO OR V. V. AT P2,799 / ONE-WAY STARTING JUNE 8, 2005

GMA dared: Break your silence on tapes

said for all.

Should clear foreign agency ID

Sotto: Say that the tape was a fake, the opposition would not pursue its threat to file an impeachment complaint against her, Enrile[s] said.

Morally wounded

"It's not yet time to celebrate," administration ally Sen. Richard Gordon said.

Political analyst Ramon Lim said the opposition may have failed to score immediate public anger, but "it doesn't mean the President is out of the woods."

"The charge has not been answered or addressed, and she will be hounded continuously by these charges unless the charges are cleared," Lim said on ANC television.

"The world is a big source of her problem because politically, she is morally wounded."

Rumors about the existence of the alleged Arroyo-Garcillano conversation had been circulating before Bunye on June 6 produced two CD copies of the alleged tape—one purportedly provided by the wife of Garcillano—to newsmen as alleged support for his position that he did not lie.

Many tapes

Opposition lawyer Alan Paguia said the presidential tape copy, saying it was a genuine tape showing an alleged high-level conspiracy to tamper with the election results.

Former Mayor Jejomar Binay, a longtime Arroyo ally, said Garcillano himself told him about the tape.

Former Mayor Jejomar Binay, a longtime Arroyo ally, said Garcillano himself told him about the tape.

Samuel Ong then emerged to say he had a "master copy" of the supposed recording.

Bunye later modified his earlier statement that it was Mr. Arroyo's voice on his personal copy of the tape. Paguia faded briefly from the limelight, and Ong went into hiding in a monastery.

Politicians, churchmen, businessmen and members of militant groups also stepped into the fray, adding to the growing public confusion.

Ronas warning

Although opposition appeared to ease over the weekend, Ms. Arroyo's allies said it was not yet time to bring out the champagne. (See related story in Across the Nation, Page A17.)

"[The Makabayan allies] officially take a business-as-usual attitude, this will happen again," Sen. Manuel Roxas II said.

"For from now," Lacson said of the outsider.

Nacionalista Rep. Eduardo Gullas, a Visayas ally of Mr. Arroyo's, said the opposition's failure to gain traction in the wake of the Watergate bugging scandal.

Bunye said Mr. Arroyo still had options to assert her political clout in crisis. "I leave it to the President to think about," he said.

Returning home a trip to Japan, Senate President Franklin Drilon expressed confidence that Ms. Arroyo would overcome the crisis.

"We'll get over this political turmoil that we are seeing today ... Democracy will survive," he said.

One more chance

Independent Rep. Raul T. Gonzalez said Ms. Arroyo should treat the next 12 months as her last chance to redeem herself.

"The country will lose the momentum it had when the President began her term 12 months ago. I think the President has to take it upon herself to make the right moves in the next 12 months to address these problems," Gonzalez said in an interview with the Inquirer.

"The handwriting is on the wall, she should act decisively now."

Moral obligation

Former Finance Secretary Jesus del Rosario Jr. called for resignation. "The President deserves our support to the duly elected leader," he said.

From the country's comedians are married.

The Chamber of Automotive Manufacturers of the Philippines Inc. applauded for calm to shield the business sector from the political tempest.

Campi president Elizabeth Lee said: "We support the constitutional authority amidst the political scandals surrounding the administration's administration. The rule of law must be maintained and our Constitution respected. We owe at least that much to ourselves as Filipinos."

Activist priest Fr. Joe Dizon backed opposition demands for Mr Arroyo to tell the nation if she had really talked to Garcillano.

"It is the moral obligation of the President to speak to the nation and tell it whether she was the one on the tape," Dizon said at the Napindan sa Manila Expo. With reports from GMA, Cabacungan Jr., PJ Bacungan, Nikko Dizon and Leila B. Salaverria

Taped voices authentic, says Tatad

Transcription

"confirmed that it is President Macapagal-Arroyo and ... Garcillano whose voices have been recorded on tape, talking about ways of cheating in the 2004 elections in Mindanao."

Tatad said the NBI, which he described as reputable, had also found the tapes to be "contiguous and sequential" and "legitimate reproductions of original phone calls."

The statement by Bureau of Investigation director Reynaldo Wycoco said: "The voices in the tapes are authentic based on the comparison of the original phone calls."

Only the bureau's forensic laboratory examined by opposition here, Benito Lacson that the findings were not conclusive enough because they were authentic were both "unauthorized."

"They are not members of the law enforcement body that's why they have no authority to release it to individuals such as Garcillano. They can conduct as many tests as they want but that would remain unofficial," Diaz told reporters.

Fraud of cheating!

Opponents of Mr. Arroyo said the taped conversations were proof that Mr.Arroyo had cheated in the last elections.

"We're presenting [the matter] to the electorate now so they will be the ones to decide what should be done. But the problem is, we're being prevented from hearing what's on the tape," Tatad said during the Kapihan sa Manila Bay at the Manila Hotel.

Tatad now chairs the non-government group Citizens vs. Corruption Task Force.

He told reporters in an ambush interview later that the tape copy was "authentic" and "legitimate" because the Bureau released last week by Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye.

Which of the tapes?

When asked which of the two tapes—if there are indeed two—the panelists were sent to the United States, Tatad said: "The one not manufactured by Malacañang."

Tatad also said he was the reporters'VII in his blog shortly after the tapes were able to be heard. He did not say where he got the tapes.

He also said he did not come out with the tapes immediately because he wanted them examined first by experts.

Rather, Bunye said the opposition planned to come out with the tapes but this time had been silenced.

According to Tatad, VII used to a June 12 report: "Supposed FOI [Office of the President] officials produced the most comparable speech pattern of the questioned female. An aural comparison of the contents recording of Macapagal-Arroyo indicated a strong similarity to the voice of the female, suggesting, it was the same speaker."

Tatad said a June VII report also noted similarities in the voices of Garcillano and the man named "Gary" whom Bunye had earlier said was the person Mr. Arroyo was allegedly talking with on the phone.

Comparison of voices

"Our aural comparison indicated a similarity in the voices. Of particular interest to us was the Garcillano, in both interviews and testimony Gary spoke such a lisp (speech impediment)," the report purportedly said.

The VII report's words signed purportedly by FBI president Neal Fiff "Bin" Alexandrescu and notarized by Mary Carol Pilapanda, a notary public for Iloilo City.

The FBI conducts voice print analysis of an aural and spectrographic nature, according to Tatad's statement.

Tatad's statement involves critical listening to the speaker's pitch, pronunciation, accent, rate of speech, breathing patterns and speech impediments.

Spectrographic analysis is conducted through the visual comparison of the patterns produced by speech sounds.

Tatad said the latest audio sent into Mr. Arroyo's alleged cheating during the 2004 polls and not the several ongoing services of the people who produced the tapes.

"When someone points to the moon, you look at the moon and not the finger doing the pointing. So where someone points to a crime, you look at the crime," he said.

Phones bugged

Tatad also said he and other members of the opposition were also bugged, citing what he called "intelligence reports that he had been receiving.

"Whenever I use the phones, there are echoes or buzzing sounds," he said.

Last week, Senator Lacson said a copy of the tape showing the alleged fix by operatives loyal to Arroyo had been found to be authentic by a voice analysis firm based in Queensland, Australia.

Shades of Mabusay, Ping calls latest caper

OPPOSITION Sen. Panfilo Lacson could not help but feel a sense of déjà vu as the drama unfolded yesterday at the San Carlos Seminary.

Lacson let out a chuckle when asked about reports that a woman was eyeing outside the seminary carrying a bag. He blurted out: "Mike Defensor, the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (Isafp), was being held inside against his will and wanted to be rescued."

Defensor, a former Mayor of Bureau of Immigration official, had sought refuge in the seminary on Friday after claiming he had a master copy of the tape of the wiretapped conversation between President Macapagal-Arroyo and Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano. Ong and Bunye had given him the tape but denied Defensor had been holed up in the seminary.

The story seemed familiar to Lacson. Two years ago, he had caused an investigation of a scandal in which he said First Gentleman Jose Miguel "Mike" Arroyo was hidden from public view in secret bank accounts under the name of Jose Pidal.

Pepe Diokno, a former Mayor of Bureau of Immigration official, had sought refuge in the seminary on Friday after claiming he had a master copy of the tape of the wiretapped conversation between President Macapagal-Arroyo and Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano. Ong and Bunye had given him the tape but denied Defensor had been holed up in the seminary.

Yesterday, Lacson said he was not surprised by the latest caper.

"Ganyan mga ang tactic nila ... pinagsisisid ang mata sa ka mag-asak (That is their tactic—pinwheeling the eyeing with ka-ka-ka-ka)," Lacson said.

Lacson had secured the crucial affidavit of Mabusay, a former operative of an social and spectographic narcotic, according to Lacson's statement.

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'Pusong Pinoy' Boys lead by example

By Jocelyn R. Uy

TEEF do not want to be called heroes. Just call them the "Pusong Pinoy" boys.

They don't care to be given cash rewards either. Good karma, while.

The group of middle-aged men: a newspaper dealer, a flower shop owner, a police officer and a fishball vendor, who call themselves the "Pusong Pinoy Boys," are scheduled to receive P1 million as reward from a shabu laboratory informant to whom they had offered help for over a year and a quarter now.

But the group said they would rather share the money with the members of the government.

On Dec. 21, 2003, Gary (not his real name) was promised a P1.5-million reward for informing police about the activities of a transnational syndicate which imported shabu and chemicals from China. The disclosure led to the discovery of the cache in an abandoned warehouse in Mandaluyong City.

The Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) under Gen. Edgar Aglipay, then National Police deputy director, promised Gary a bonus on early guard at a depot close to the shabu warehouse, that he would get P500,000 to P750,000 for each drug shipment discovered. The abandoned warehouse yielded about P1 billion in drugs.

By that, Gary was forced to quit his job for fear that his noise-sensitive employer for his life.

The "Pusong Pinoy" Boys—Aquilito Alfonso, Joselito Alfonso, Ernesto Gonzalo and Eric Aguinaldo—came to his rescue.

Scared

The group was formed through Gary's brother, who had asked his longtime friend Joselito Alfonso for help. "He was scared for Gary's life, as he came to me for help after the police raided the warehouse," Alfonso told The Inquirer.

Alfonso then sought his uncle, Eugelio; his policeman friend, Gonzalez, and another close friend, Aguinaldo.

"The (Gaviles) came to me because he said I knew people who could help Gary," said the elder Alfonso, a newspaper dealer and president of the Bookboys and Vendors of Cubao, Marikina, Antipolo Association Inc. (BVC-MAA).

The four men became Gary's mentors and "financiers," taking turns in assuring him do the legwork and paperwork that ran. It lasted that, indeed, Gary was the informant and that he was the person entitled to the huge sum of money.

Gary told the "Pusong Pinoy" Boys brought Gary to DENR to ask for a recommendation from addressed to then PDEA chief Aglipay Arevalo. The letter was signed by radio anchor Kaye Ejercito and read: "Beanie, Gary's of Teddy, Manila, has approached my station dyMM regarding his public service appeal about his request for a particular drug case. Aware of your concern for our less fortunate citizens and your commitment to help the needy, we are referring the person to you personally."

Because of the valuable help he rendered, both the group, Gary decided to share his reward with them.

The P6-million would be kind of sent to them when the cash prize materialize sometime this month, beyond the keystone.

"But we had agreed to donate whatever share Gary was going to give us to the government because it needs the money," Alfonso said.

"When (some) saved the money? But we thought it over and we decided to donate it to the government which needs it badly. Anyway, we have our own jobs and we also have our own food, income," he added.

Alfonso, 56, had gone through rough times. At the age of 12, he sold newspapers. Today, he is a dealer of various newspapers, including the business.

"I have been a dealer of the business for 20 years since As a matter of fact, I was given a loyalty award just last month," he said.

The younger Alfonso, 34, on the other hand, owns a flower shop in Manila that counts famous personalities as clients.

Apart from the flower shop, he also dabbled in the soup trade with Gonzalez, his friend of 12 years. Gonzalez, on the other hand, runs his own printing press with his wife, and is a full-time policeman. A Criminal Investigation Detection Group agent, the 49-year-old Gonzales has been in the police service for 30 years now.

Eric Aguinaldo, 26, the youngest in the group, described as a thrilling fishball trade, but is also thinking of going overseas to look for better opportunities.

As might partner just that, he authorize the aid of the band could that sweeps the group, he said.

A document provided The Inquirer showed that the PDEA and the Department of Interior and Local Government would be allocated P500,000 each for their efforts in busting illegal drugs syndicates.

"Those agencies could use the money to augment their funds for the policemen and other employees who are in need," the elder Alfonso said.

Cainta, Antipolo City and Marikina City will also receive P250,000, P200,000 and P1.5 million, respectively, on the other hand, The Metropolitan Manila Development Authority will get P1 million "to augment funds for their marshmallow projects," Alfonso explained. The remainder would have been the group's share. Initially, the group wanted to give P1 million each to the Philippine Brotherhood Youth Club and the SYCMAA. Later, they decided to give the P2 million to the government.

Right Stuff

"This is the right time to give our government a chance," Alfonso said, adding that it was up to the President to put the money to good use. "We want to bring back that old Filipino trait of *bayanihan*, where one helps volunteerily without waiting for a reward," Joselito added.

The "Pusong Pinoy" Boys are optimistic that soon, through their example, Filipinos would "re-learn" how to extend a helping hand without expecting anything in return.

GOODBYE, SUMMER
A man takes a nap in a hammock along Commonwealth Avenue, Quezon City, while he still can before the rains come.

No snags along Edsa for returning students

[illegible] to school today.

This was the summer Southern Police District (SPD) Chief Supt. Wilfredo Uaseo gave to worried students and parents as police and crowds continued to flock to the San Carlos Seminary in Guadalupe, Makati City.

Senator Ong, former deputy director of the National Bureau of Investigation, had sought shelter in the seminary since Friday after claiming, in a press conference, that he had the original tape of a telephone dialogue allegedly showing that President Macapagal-Arroyo had manipulated the last presidential election.

"The situation in southern Metro Manila is very normal. It is business as usual here," Uaseo told the Inquirer yesterday.

He also said enough police forces were deployed to contain the situation outside the area.

Many on the streets of Guadalupe and Edsa, where current passers-by occasionally dropped by, said tailbuts converged from time to time.

Several 200 SPD policemen had been detailed in the area since Sunday to control any disturbance along Edsa.

"We are doing what should be done," the SPD chief said, assuring the public that there was nothing to be worried about.

Traffic would be "tolerable" today, Uaseo also assured motorists, especially for public school students who would be returning to classes tomorrow.

Owner of mystery car in seminary known today

By Jocelyn R. Uy

THE WHITE car that had caused panic at the San Carlos Seminary since Friday was not stolen or lost, police said.

Police have checked with the Land Transportation Management System in the Southern Police District (SPD) and found out that no white Mitsubishi Galant with plate number TSC-796 had been listed among the stolen or missing vehicles.

"We have verified the information, and the vehicle has been cleared," SPD police inspector Eduardo Tangol told the Inquirer yesterday.

However, he said the identity of the owner of the car, as well as the baby's bladder in the M Mirage sack still be found inside it, would only be known today after a check at the Inspector in Camp Crame and the Land Transportation Office.

The police would check the car's registration papers to the LTO through its plate number, chassis and engine number.

Yesterday, a special nonworking holiday, police could only gather other documentary proof, more so the vehicle and by-the-by permission officer were cleared.

"We are gathering the official documents, including the memorandum of receipt from which we would be able to trace the receipt of the firearm," SPD Chief Supt. Wilfredo Uaseo said in a separate interview.

Apart from the 9-15 search [illegible], which San Carlos Seminary security officials claimed to be partially hidden in the passenger seat, no relevant objects had been found inside the car, Tangol said.

The white vehicle, which Antonel Ong's supporters suspected to was to be used to trace the whereabouts of the former government agent, had been towed over to the SPD Anti-Carnapping unit following observation.

Anti-illegal drugs drive enlists help of families

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

THE FIGHT against drug addiction begins at home.

Police and local officials in Muntinlupa City are encouraging families to cooperate in the fight against illegal drugs by reporting to authorities pushers and users in their neighborhood, or even those inside their homes.

As part of the drive, the entire family and not only the drug user, will be required to undergo counseling, city police chief Edward Delangues told the Inquirer.

"Nearly 90 percent of drug users brought to rehabilitation centers go back to illegal drugs, rendering the entire family in the succeeding could change this," he said. The program relies heavily on community participation.

Residents are encouraged to provide information on the identities of users and pushers to their barangay local leaders, the police or to the city's anti-illegal drug abuse council.

The council already maintains a database of suspected drug users and pushers, he said.

He said drug users, whom he considers as victims, would be brought to a rehabilitation center. Their relatives shall also undergo counseling to prepare them for the day the user is released from rehabilitation.

Small-time pushers are first warned to stop their illegal activities.

But they would be arrested if they continue to ignore the warnings, Velasquez added.

GMA should reinstate sacked colonel

THE PRESIDENT'S son, Dionyan, go Rep. Mikey Arroyo, has filed a letter of absence in the wake of his reported involvement in the "hacking" probe.

Negros Occidental Rep. Iggy Arroyo, President Macapagal-Arroyo's brother-in-law, should do the same. He, too, had been implicated in the jueteng payola scandal.

Mikey and Iggy have become a political burden to the President in this time.

The accusations against them may have been fabricated, but the public perception is that they received jueteng money.

It's unthinkable why they if the accusations were true, would dip their fingers in the jueteng pie when it's rumored the downfall of former President Erap.

They are either stupid or super arrogant. That is, if the allegations are true.

* * *

It's a well-kept secret in the Philippine National Police (PNP) that a certain presidential relative was responsible for the reassignment of officers to areas where jueteng was rampant.

ON TARGET
Ramon Tulfo

It's not referring to Mikey Arroyo. Neither am I referring to First Gentleman Mike Arroyo.

* * *

The only way out for the President is the "Vice of the Spy" controversy is to ask her colleagues in the Senate and the House of Representatives to have her impeached.

That way she would have her day in court, so-to-speak.

If Iggy Lacson is brought to bear against her on the rape controversy, people will suspect her administration of a cover-up.

Ms. Arroyo has come too close in the jueteng scandal even if her close relatives have been implicated.

It would be good for her image if she would admit herself to the proceedings and then come out fresh and clean.

* * *

GMA's predicament on the jueteng issue was the same faced by former President Cory Aquino during her time.

President Cory's close relatives were allegedly associating with jueteng lords or running the illegal numbers game Bonte-ochoa.

But Tita Cory never got involved in jueteng. She was also involved about what those close to her were doing.

* * *

The President will win the sympathy of the soldiers in the field if she orders the reinstatement of Col. Nicanor Mendoza to his old post.

Mendoza was relieved as commander of the 464th Infantry Brigade based in Sulu after Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes had to prioritize abroad.

He asked why there was a need to construct the 60-coast Bonifacio military retreat when soldiers were dying of honor charge and enlistees in the battlefield due to lack of medicines.

Gen. Efren Abu, Armed Forces chief of staff, who has become notorious for allowing the construction of the resort and the P10-million sidewalk in Camp Aguinaldo, was raging mad after reading Mendoza's e-mail to his friends (class mates).

Mendoza belongs to the Philippine Military Academy Class of 1977.

Mendoza was just voicing the sentiments of soldiers in the field.

MARIFE Fajardo

MIKE Jhon Bermas

Marife, Baby Mike appeal to donors for medical aid

TWO CHILDREN need your help.

Diagnosed with chronic myelogenous leukemia, 12-year-old Marife Fajardo endures physical pain if only to continue her schooling. Not enough years does not stop her from pursuing her dreams. Financial difficulties just might.

On the other hand, baby Mike Jhon Bermas has been diagnosed with pneumocephalic hydrocephalus. At two years of age, he is still unable to walk. Bermas is at the Philippine General Hospital but he may stay for one more month.

Mikey's parents, Evelyn and Michael, have received the news with heavy hearts, and when loneliness chews away at the rest of their and's medication. Their combined income as farmer and market vendor barely covers the costs of their daily living.

Marife and baby Mike are appealing to kindhearted readers to help their parents shoulder the cost of their medication.

Interested parties may contact Marife at 0928-6204831. Mike and his parents may be reached through 525-3336 c/o Eleonora Pura.

Donations can also be sent to baby Mike directly through Allied Bank (Tandang Sora) to the joint account of Evelyn and Rodolfo Bermas, #0781170001.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

METRO

TUESDAY, JUNE 14, 2011

Editor Ever G. Dijamco

Night of prayers ends in tragedy

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

WHAT began as a solemn occasion ended in tragedy for one of two women who conducted a long session of prayers and chanting the other night.

Earlier, residents inside a two-story house in Mandaluyong City were bothered by sounds that came from a natural room on the ground floor that reportedly came from two women who were loudly chanting prayers.

When the other tenants came to check on the ruckus yesterday morning, they found one of the women, identified Fredita Bonifacio, 50, already dead, blood oozing from her head.

Master Llave Ruiz, a tenant, was in a state of shock. Her hands and feet were noticeably swollen, witnesses said. Both women were found naked, according to police.

Residents had been visiting the room on the first floor of the house on Sto. Rosario Street, Barangay Plainview, for more than a month now.

She was seen entering the house with Ruiz on Friday afternoon, witnesses Fernando Quintelino told the police.

Quintelino was with the family of tenant Gilbert Gillego, 50, owner of the house, who had just arrived from the United States on Thursday, and was staying on the second floor.

The other night, as they prepared for bed, sounds as the Gillegos household had complained about the noise from Bonifacio's room on the ground floor.

"They were shouting prayers," Alice, a caretaker, said.

They ignored the loud chants, hoping the prayer session would soon be over. But the chanting grew on, accompanied by the sound of objects being thrown against the wall, Alice added.

The chants persisted while the owners of the house were eating breakfast early yesterday morning.

By then, only one woman was heard chanting. Quintelino said. Curious about what was happening, he said he and Gillego peeped through a small opening in the wall.

Gillego said he saw a naked woman lying on the floor. Alarmed, she asked, Ruiz went straight to the room and opened the door, which was not locked. according to Quintelino, and saw Bonifacio already dead.

Ruiz was in a state of shock and could not give a clear account of what happened, her uncle Ding told the reporters. "She looked possessed," the uncle said.

"Death can come one and you will be saved," he quoted his niece as telling him, while she was lying on a bed at the Polymedic Hospital.

Ruiz continued to recite prayers while in the hospital, the uncle added.

Ruiz and Bonifacio were close friends, according to Ruiz's mother Imelda. She said Bonifacio was her daughter's tutor when she was in grade school.

Imelda said Bonifacio was very intelligent, but there had been rumors that she had gone mad.

"Bonifacio would tell people she could speak directly to God. This is why I had been telling my daughter to stay away from her," Imelda said.

Investigators could not immediately say what really happened inside the room as they were unable to talk to Ruiz extensively. any police investigators dare invisible forces said.

Hot weather only a lull in rainy season, says Pagasa

By DJ Yap

WHERE did the rain go?

If it seems like summer in Metro Manila, don't be confused. The scorching weather is only a normal "lull" in the rainy season, according to a government forecaster.

We rain may continue to appear in all its glory in the next three or more days, said Alma Perucla, daily forecaster at the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa).

But Pagasa is also expecting rain showers and thunderstorms in some areas of the metropolis, the meteorologist said.

More rains will drench Metro Manila in July and August, the peak of the southwest monsoon season, she added. Prevailing high pressure on the Pacific front is causing the sun to shine on Northern Luzon and Metro Manila, said Perucla.

The last weather monsoon with the heavy rains that fell on Metro Manila in early June with the opening of schools.

With the weather worsening from rain to shine, Perucla advised students to take lots of Vitamin C and liquids, especially fruit juices and water. "they should also avoid people down with the flu, or are prone to colds or coughing spells, she added.

LONGEST MURAL ON CANVAS

Young painters from the Metro Jam artists from the KALAHI Cultural Core-giving Program in expressing their love for country through the 'Longest Mural On Canvas' project sponsored by the National Commission for the Culture and the Arts, the Office of the PA on Culture, and the tourism department in time for Independence Day activities last Sunday

Makati mounts campaign vs smoke belchers

THE MAKATI Department of Public Safety (DPS) will conduct intensified campaigns against illegal (vehicular) public utility vehicles and smoke belchers in the country's financial capital next week.

DPS Director Bernardo Miguel said the city is coordinating with national government agencies and the private sector in the campaign, which was ordered by Makati Mayor Jejomar C. Binay.

Binay had said he does not want addition the issues of old-smoke vehicles, or exhaust, without the required franchises to operate, clog the congestion and air pollution.

He cited the need to clear Makati's streets of these vehicles, as well as smoke belchers, whether these are public utility vehicles or are privately owned.

The Makati mayor also instructed the BPS to ensure that all offenders are penalized to the.

Drivers of colorum vehicles face a fine of P1,000.

Their licenses will also be confiscated.

Smoke belchers face a minimum fine of P 1,000.

The GARCI tapes:

SA LIKOD NG pagba- BALITA

Isang special report. Huwebes, alas 10 n.g. sa ABC

INQ INQ TV TV

TUESDAY, JUNE 14, 2005

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

SPORTS

Editor Teddyboy S. Melendres

TONIGHT: The Stags do-or-die Champ-pionship, 5:30 p.m. at STAR Sports – Take another look at the finals.

TBA: Opening ceremonies for the Philippine Cup, 7:30 p.m.; ESPN – Get a head start on the second major event of the year.

Schedules subject to change without prior notice.

WHAT'S INSIDE

- Prolific Miller books new PBA record /A24
- Raikkonen tops Canadian GP as leader Alonso crashes out /A24
- Annika sets new mark /A25
- Spurs rout Pistons, 2-0 /A25

Paintmasters shoot for a sweep

SPTEE working for runner-up finish or in the last two conferences, Petron Blaze is now eager to erase those heartbreaking memories.

And the Boysmaster were to do it in quick fashion as they got for a finish sweep against the Mandala Jewels in the PBA Unity Cup today at the Cuneta Astrodome.

"We're definitely going for the sweep," said coach Gabe Garcia, who will try to wrap it up in Game 2 of the best-of-five series at 5:30 p.m.

The Jewels, who defeated the Paintmasters for the Open title last four months ago, couldn't come up with a strong finish in the last two games.

So they were face the tall order of winning three in a row to bag their second straight championship.

The task, though, doesn't appear impossible for Jewels coach Robert Jones.

"The team's morale is still high and intact," he said. "We believe in each other and I'm sure that our positive attitude would make us come back in the series."

In fact, Garcia agreed that the Jewels are capable of spoiling the Paintmasters' bid for their sixth crown in 11 finals appearances.

"Mandala is a dangerous team," he noted. "Anytime, they can come back. They can come out strong and finish the game easily."

Only to rivet stind the strong shooting performance of the Jewels, who somehow automatically set events in Game 2.

"Despite losing three best players, they had a chance to win the game," assessed Garcia, referring to Jewels veterans Mel Comptoo, who failed to score in 10 outs of play due to a sprained left ankle sustained during practice.

Mel Comptoo pulled off an unlikely 46-to-victory last December after leading by as many as 18 points late in the third period.

Just hours after winning the Fantastic Freshman award, Paolo Orbeta delivered the key baskets in the 19-6 finish Wednesday and added in the fourth quarter.

The 5-foot-10 point guard, who shot all of his eight points in the decisive run, provided Anthony Washington much needed help.

Veterans Jay-R Reyes, Jun Rajendo and Eugene Tan also backed Washington, who ended with 18 points and 16 rebounds.

For the first three quarters, the Jewels were headed for an easy win. Hard work more than Jun Jun Salvador struggling offensively the rest of his teammates displayed the attacking flair the Jewels are known for.

Eric dele Cuesta led the Jewels' backcourt, scoring 12 of his 14 points from beyond the arc. But surprisingly, their shots just wouldn't fall in the final period.

The Jewels also controlled most of the game in the series opener, but the Paintmasters proved to be tenacious down the stretch for an 83-80 win. Asaminew M. Paye

V-LEAGUE

Ateneo spikers rip SSC; UST wins

By Marc Anthony Reyes

THE TIGRESSES celebrate a point against the Lady Archers during their match at the Rizal Coliseum

IT MAY be a no-hearing game, but Ateneo took it seriously and the entire, cheering cast of Blue Eagles.

Sebastian, 25-18, 25-22, 25-22, yesterday to continue its excellence for the semifinals of the 2005 Shakey's V-League first conference at the Rizal Coliseum.

Camille Taborada, Michelle Lalaguna and Amelia Guanco combined with composure to help the Lady Eagles to their fifth win in nine matches.

The Lady Stags slumped to their third defeat against six victories but are nevertheless assured of a berth in the semifinals along with other contenders, the Jessie Tomas Tigresses and the league-leading La Salle Lady Archers.

In the second game, Rosanna Hernandez snared a game-high 26 points as the UST unyielded La Salle's explosive offensive attack with 1-28-26, 25-22, 21-25, 25-23 win.

The Archer Pioneers also had many weeks to lead the Tigresses to their seventh victory in 10 matches. Most importantly, UST spoiled La Salle's eight-game winning run.

Possible spikes Joyce Pascual 13 points while the other half of UST's twin towers, Mary Jean Balse, accounted for 12 points.

Michelle Carolino led the Lady Archers with 19 points with Maureen Penetrante contributing 15.

The semifinal phase begins next week.

A topnotch beach volleyball player who once played for La Salle-Bacolod, Taborada is tied for the Ateneo scorer with 16 points, 14 of them on smashes, while Lalaguna and Guanco added 13 and 11, respectively.

"This is like our season-cup game going into the semifinals," said Ateneo coach Lerma Gequinta, who also drew inspired performances from his Boise Grings, who scored nine points in two sets and acted as the spiritual leader for the squad.

"It's her best game so far and I'm happy she's already her rarely regaining her old form," Gequinta said of Dilrap who is one of the schools "reinforcements" for the tournament.

National team mainstay Cherry Rose Bilasano was the only one among the Lady Stags with the fighting mood, making 20 points, including 19 kills.

Jan Sebastian failed to get good performance from skipper Jennifer Bolanos and Jeanne Espinosa, who combined for just nine points.

The tournament, sponsored by Shakey's Pizza, is also backed by Accel, Milkasa, IBC 13 and Jemah Televisions.

With a report from Karla Denia Magno

RP's Manalo marvelous in Nevada tilt

FILIPINO Marlon Manalo bagged the last seven ranks to defeat American Tony Chohan, 9-5, in the finals Sunday and nail the 2005 Nitro Open Billiard Championship at the Sands Regency Hotel in Reno, Nevada.

Manalo, the 28-year-old Economics graduate from Jose Rizal University in Mandaluyong City, pocketed the cop prize of $12,000 (P640,000) in the tournament that lured some of the world's finest cue artists.

Chohan rolled to runner-up with $6,000 and settled for the runner-up prize of $5,400.

On the way to the finals, Manalo took a bye in the first round then beat Danny Raykendall, 9-0, Ringo Bustay, 9-8, Carl Wilson Jr., 9-1, Glenn Attardi, 9-5, competitor Steven Stevinson Jr., 9-8, and Miguel Portugal, 9-7.

Jose "Sonsing" Parica was not as lucky. The 56-year-old veteran was ousted in West Covina, California, absorbed successive losses to Jeremy Jones, 9-5, and Luke Omen, 9-6, and bowed out of the action early. Marlon Bernardino, Conti Bustos

PUYAT: Mockery

Puyat blasts BAP for defying POC

TWO-TIME International Basketball Federation (FIBA) president Gerardo "Lito" Puyat yesterday lambasted the Basketball Association of the Philippines for defying the federation's suspension imposed on it by the country's highest sports body, the Philippine Olympic Committee.

"The BAP is making a mockery of the POC order, which was unanimously approved during the general assembly, by reorganizing its leadership and hosting the Asian University Basketball Championship called the Carl Moody Ching Cup in Dumaguete," said Puyat.

According to Puyat, the is a clear defiance of the POC's order, "Instead of appealing the decision, the BAP named former DILG secretary Joey Lina as president together with four others and pushed through with the Asian tournament."

Puyat pointed out that the BAP is resorting the backing of the Office and Pita Arts, which

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Ateneo-La Salle cage duel July 2

By Jasmine W. Paye

LA SALLE'S Eloy Mangsora (fourth from left) and Ateneo's Chito Narvasa end the agreement for a basketball showdown with chandelabra.

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Raikkonen tops Canadian GP as leader Alonso crashes out

MONTREAL, Canada—Kimi Raikkonen gave his title hopes a huge boost when he won the Canadian Grand Prix after championship leader Fernando Alonso crashed out of the race here Sunday.

Finn Raikkonen made up for the disappointment of crashing out of the lead on the last lap of the last race with a controlled ride to his second after seeing both his Renault rivals watched close to suspension problems.

The result closed the gap between Alonso and Raikkonen to 20 points and moved Raikkonen and McLaren team within 12 points of championship leaders Renault with 11 races still to run.

"It's one point we were a bit lucky to win, but our worst enemy is always the race," said Raikkonen. "We got the 10 points back that we lost in the last race and we are back in the championship."

MCLAREN'S Kimi Raikkonen (foreground) snaps Michael Schumacher at his car on the Circuit Gilles Villeneuve in Montreal, Canada. AP

"We had a fast car but I had a small problem with the steering wheel. I nailed the turns what was going on and they said they would sort the problem," he added.

Raikkonen's win never seemed in doubt and roared home ahead of second-placed Michael Schumacher.

Alonso was left embarrassed after his throwing away a potential victory when a simple mistake put him into the wall.

Seven-time world champion Schumacher gave Ferrari a boost when he replenished on their rivals' mistakes to secure his second podium finish of the season after starting from the front row.

The German aims his Ferrari team-mate improver Jo from the mark, and thanks to developments on their F2005 car and from their tire supplier Bridgestone.

The second place finish pushed Schumacher up to fifth in the world championship.

Polo sister Jenson Button was a high-profile loser when he crashed out of a podium place and Juan Pablo Montoya was also left red-faced when his new downfall, find from a potential second place.

Button, Barrichello started from the pit lane after failing to set a time in qualifying but good tire race and a strong performance all turned him to make it into fourth on the podium on his planned third. AFP

Cebu's USC, Korean quintet in big starts

GAMES TODAY
(Cebu Sports Complex)
1 p.m.—Hong Kong vs. Indonesia
3 p.m.—Taiwan vs. Malaysia
5 p.m.—Hong Kong vs. Philippines

GUANGZHOU (CITY)—Cebu City's University of San Carlos overcame height disadvantage with speed and shooting accuracy to stun Chinese Taipei's Taoyuan University, 62-60, Sunday in the FIG 4th Asian University Basketball Championship Girl Wesley Ching Cup at the Luohoren Martial gym here.

Nina Ramirez had five triples as the Cebuanos thwarted the Chinese Taipei team's bid to reach the semifinals with an average height of 6-4.

South Korea's Hyosung II University conquered Silliman University from long range to prevail, 82-73, in the other game.

Ramirez, who as a child was taught how to dribble by his uncle, PBA great Wilfredo "Butch" Ramirez, finished with a game-high 27 points, 13 coming in the first half.

"We outran the Chinese and used the full-court press to keep them away from the dreaded hook," said USC Miss head coach Joy Ramirez.

The Koreans, who fired 11 triples from the three-point range, also soared late in the preliminary area, outscoring 76 percent of their shots.

SPORTSWATCH

Figueroa on target again in Baguio

OLYMPIAN Jeanne Figueroa advanced to the quarterfinals with another victory in the 3d Acabashin Invitational held in the National Hockey Association of the Philippines (Nasp) recently in Baguio City. Figueroa, now assigned athlete under the Philippine Olympic Committee (POC), defeated Ms. Cristina Ramirez, 21-15, 21-11 in the women's singles program geared for the 2005 Beijing Olympics. Another POC-sponsored bowler Gerwin Gael Tantiado of Manila, 19-16, in the Olympic round-to-a big follow-up to her earlier victory in the second qualifying tournament last May. Earlier, the Tondo-based Figueroa drew a bye and then defeated Melissa de los Reyes, 21-13. Rachelle Ann Cabral ousted their pairs after defeating Ms. Ma. 18.

Gatchalian powers Filipino keglers

MANILA: Junior Jeanne Gatchalian of the Philippines rolled 864 pins to her gamers to bag the Masters Whore the recent 45th Filipino Chinese Friendship Bowling Tournament at Bowling Inc. Gatchalian, who finished up her three-game tournament with a perfect 300 game in the team event where he finished with a 10-game series of 2,446, pin together 258 and 266 to lead Colony team's Aries by 49-80, and Ormoc's Dang Hsieh (280). Hsieh Pakpoom of Bowling Inc. finished in fourth with 671, followed by Dang Gaudencio (China) with 658 and Christine Ng (China by Inc.) with 647. The Gatchalian-led Filipino squad's also The team event. The Chinese team was second with 5,020 while the Colony team was third with 4,956. Gatchalian finished with 298 points based on the game scores of 258, 258, 266, 182, 202, 180, 256, 258, 258 and 256. Other members of the winning team were Hsieh Pakpoom, Victor Hsieh, Christine Ng, Gaudencio Dang, Jr., Gatchalian, Tony Gatchalian, Chris Dalmau, Willie Balthazar, Angelo Constantino and Marlon Enriquez.

Janiola stops Escaner in 2nd round

SR. 2.BOOM Synergie mandatory challenger Ryan Janiola knocked out Ricky Escaner with a powerful left hook at the 1:57 mark of the second round of a scheduled 10-rounder headlining the Independence Day "Showdown at Kuya" card last Sunday in Cebu. Janiola thus boosted his chances for a crack at WBF 108-0-0 ring IBF Bulgaby of the 12 unbeaten boxer. Janiola's handlers are negotiating with the representatives of Don King Gregolio's promoter on the possibility of a mega-showdown sometime in the third quarter of next year. Janiola, who was rated by eight decision over Greg Morgan in another 10-rounder. Other boxers who Pingping Tayora beat Mark Angeles over eight rounds and Marvin Cases knocked out Freddie Malinao at 0:56 of the first round. Ariel Montaña and Ondong Sadie fought a scheduled eight-round bout.

Prolific Miller books new PBA record

By June Navarro

FOR SEVENFOOTWO a "20-20 game" the entire conference, Antonio "The Big" Miller of Red Bull has written a distinguished chapter in the Philippine Basketball Association record books.

After averaging 22.6 points and 21 rebounds in all of the Expressions, the former UA Lakers became the first import to nearly run double to address the feat after Alaska's David Benoit did the trick in the 1989 Reinforced Conference.

But while expanding upon Miller's accomplishment was the fact that the 6-foot-10 cager racked it up in 20 games compared to Benoit's 21, making it the longest all-time scoring import since the league's inception three decades ago.

"I never thought about breaking any record," said Miller after his hopes vanished following the Express' exit in the wild-card phase of the Unas Makabit PBA Metro-Cup Conference. "All I wanted was to win a championship for Bull's."

Coach Boy Kintanar and the Express lost the decider of a best-of-three series against a determined Purefoods TJ Hotdogs squad, 94-86, to miss the quarterfinals for the sixth-consecutive conference.

"It was a great conference for us," said Miller. "Coach Boy did an awesome job of motivating the players and hopefully next time we can get things done."

Miller and Chris Burgess of San Miguel Beer are the only two imports who have remained in the conference, making Miller a cinch for the best import plum.

The 6-foot-10 Burgess remains third overall in blocking (1.6 bpg), not rebounding (10.1 rpg) but went in scoring (23.6 ppg) among imports.

"If you ask my choice for the best import award, my vote will remain by go to Pig Miller," said Purefoods coach Ryan Gregorio.

"He's probably the best among the imports and at the same time Bull's has a great coach who did a tremendous job of turning that franchise around," Gregorio added.

ANTHONY Miller, prime candidate for best import

Contacted with just a recognizable finish every conference since joining the pro league in 2002, the Bull's Express has transformed from perennial tailender to title contender immediately after Kintanar took over the helm.

The Express ensured up fifth after the dandelion round of the eliminations, the first time in franchise history that the team advanced past the preliminaries armed at the up-per half of the standings.

Puyat blasts BAP for defying POC . . .

Front page 4

sued to be called the Asian Basketball Confederation.

"This act clearly contradicts the POC Charter because the BAP is encouraging foreign intervention in a local sports event in violation of the National Olympic Committee is empowered to resolve," he said.

Puyat noted that while the BAP is trying to erase its image by appointing Lim, Tantiuay president COO Wilson Young, former POC president Cesty Puno, PeBa president Jun Alvarez and super Jerry Codilles as new officers, it retained the controversial secretary general Graham Lim, who is facing deportation.

The BAP's action, Puyat said, puts it on a head-on collision with the POC which has created a "basketball committee" tasked to form a new cage body.

Retired police general Edgardo Aglipay who heads the POC basketball committee, has led the groundwork for the formation of the Philippine Basketball Federation Inc. (PBFI) made up of local basketball stakeholders.

The POC is set to expel the BAP and their owls PBa recognition for PBFI as basketball's governing body.

NOVICE'S MEET: Young swimmers frolic up before the heats of the 100-meter butterfly during the week-long Phillip Morris Series meet at the Philsports pool in Pasig recently. Over 200 youngsters joined the competition conducted by Olympian Akiko Morris, program organizer of the Mila summer swimming program.

Ateneo-La Salle cage . . .

Front page 4

Jervis Gee and coach Virgil Villaverde of La Salle will clash with Jervis Gerosa, Larry Rosario, Nelo Bugia, Rainier Reyes and Sandy Arespacochaga of Ateneo.

Then will also be La Lagunda's first half shoot-out joining the Archers' East Backmasters and Ramonsito Campos with the Eagles' Jimmy Alapag and Pido Flores.

The event was conceptualized by the Ateneo Alumni Assn. (AAA) and La Salle Green Archers Association (LSGAA) in cooperation with Four Play Sports Management.

World Slasher Cup under way at Big Dome

THE EVENT billed as the "Olympics of cockfighting" unfolds today with a big international cast vying in the WCA World Slasher Cup & Cock Championship Derby at the Araneta Coliseum.

Hosted by Big Dome owner Jorge Araneta, Jr. and Philippine Cock Fighters, the event is by the world's biggest cockfighting event got to under way with the 2-cock qualifying round.

The semifinals is scheduled Thursday, with the qualifiers battling for the championship on Saturday.

Heading the foreign contingent are 2005 World Slasher Cup champion Joseph Mbhoni of Malaysia and reigning champion Jim Barrington, Roy Hanes and Bill Bates of Dubai, 2005 champ Roger Roberts of Georgia, Johnny Moore of Tennessee, Larry Barnes of California, Mike Lunn and Richard Izzy of Florida and Billy Johnson of Arizona.

"Better a year, thousands of aficionados all over the country, even the Balikbayans, pack their bags for the Araneta Coliseum to attend this one big showdown among the finest gamecocks," said Tirazo, also president of WCA.

For tickets, call 911-13-101 or 911-2926.

From icon to idiot

Al S. Mendoza

Would would a "boos light be without controversy?

Only Boxing, like world-watching.

That's what's become of Mike Tyson.

Ever since he chose a bit of Evander Holyfield's ear almost a decade ago—was it 1997?—Tyson has become almost synonymous with controversy.

It happened again on Sunday in Washington DC when Tyson quit in the sixth round against Kevin McBride, whose supposed claim to fame is that Tyson the last time in the fight scheduled for 10 rounds.

Although it was clear he was exhausted near the end of the sixth round, the 35,472 people that attended the fight at the MCI were stunned when Tyson did not answer the bell for the seventh round.

He had fallen by the ninth, but not from a punch. Although there was shouting after they had climbed, Tyson fell from the sheer weight of exhaustion and partly too from McBride's punishing but pushing.

Breathing through his mouth as the 11 months of ring inactivity began to show—Tyson last fought in July 2004, losing by fourth-round knockout to Danny Williams—Tyson collapsed like a drunk unable to control his bodies.

I almost him, and for which said it took him almost 20 seconds to get up. When he did, he seemed lost, not knowing clearly where he was.

If somebody told him he was in a Chinese restaurant and he ordered some kind of fried rice, you'd be a KO if you couldn't at least break into a smile.

Before quitting, Tyson wasn't hit hard by McBride, who had been expected to box mainly because more than half of the 22 wins he had scored were mostly against patsies, if not fighters reduced one from retirement to prop up his record.

Neither was Tyson got punished in any of the rounds prior to the sixth, although McBride did connect a couple of jarring with frightful.

Why he was not surprised for life, banned from boxing history for that sacrilege in the sweet science is a blot in the sport.

Here is a man convicted and who served a prison sentence for rape, continually being paraded atop the ring crowd it's very clear he has now transformed himself from icon to idiot.

Truly, America is the land of the brave and the free. Once in Tyson to freely act out his unspoken dia late in his career as a glowing corner that began when he became, at 18, the youngest heavyweight champion of the world.

Truly, contemplate remained baffled, continue to grapple with the fact that the explosion of so many people still come to watch each time Tyson climbed the ring.

After shocking his first defeat in his last four fights, Tyson, now 38-6, said, "I don't have the guts to stay in the sport anymore."

If you can't show that, you should not be a professional. If not a sociologist still will ing to analyze the Tyson Syndrome.

Added Tyson: "I mean [Kirby Puzon] fight promoter, I mean] discussed the sport by losing you fighters of this caliber."

The guilt to touch McBride, a 32-year-old Irish who might yet enter the record books of boxing as the one who sent Tyson to his retirement—finally?

Ah, but you are dealing here with a loser, a loser that, desperate to beat "a fighter of this caliber," he found little the guy whom he couldn't land the big punch. That came after Tyson tried to break the left arm of McBride after holding it real hard.

He said he "won't fight anymore?"

Didn't Tyson pocket $5 million for this good for nothing loser?

Must still be right after seven along.

Ginobili: Detroit's big puzzle

SAN ANTONIO—The defending NBA champion Detroit Pistons are heading back home to Auburn Hills 2-0 down to the San Antonio Spurs in the NBA Finals and looking for answers.

Not only are they hunting for reasons why they have been so badly outplayed in the first two games of the best-of-seven series but they are desperately seeking a way to stop Manu Ginobili.

The Argentine guard scored 27 points in his second consecutive dominating performance of the series as the Spurs crushed the Pistons 95-76 on Sunday to head to Detroit with a commanding two game advantage.

Hats at the SBC Arena chanted "MVP!" when Ginobili was at the foul line and given his performances in the opening two games of the series, he is certainly a candidate for 10 more honors.

However, similar to his teammates, Ginobili is nervous at what role the prospect of picking up individual awards.

"You appreciate it, it's beautiful," Ginobili said of the crowd's recognition. "But it's something more of us should be thinking.

"Once we win the championship we can think about it but right now, I'm not."

Quite a show

The Pistons are clearly thinking about Ginobili, who has been putting on quite a show at their expense.

"He's been playing great," Detroit's Richard Hamilton said. "The one thing we probably need to do is to keep pressure on him, don't let him do everything he's doing out there."

That is easier said than done, because Ginobili is acting as a field general on the court, setting up plays and when needed, doing a lot of the scoring himself.

"Manu has been awesome," said teammate Tim Duncan, a two-time Finals MVP. "He's doing everything to help us."

However, the Spurs have the 2-0 series lead going back to Detroit for a lot of reasons, not just Ginobili.

Not wanting that golden target on a well-organized defense, the Pistons cannot seem to contain any of San Antonio's attacking weapons.

"Our big problem is that we're having trouble stopping them," Detroit coach Larry Brown admitted. Reuters

ARGENTINEAN Manu Ginobili (center) of the Spurs tries to shoot over Ben Wallace (left) and Lindsey Hunter of the Pistons during Game 2. AFP

Spurs rout Pistons for 2-0 Finals lead

SAN ANTONIO— Fans erupted in chants of "MVP! MVP!" as Manu Ginobili sank a pair of free throws with 2:44 left in the fourth quarter, and the Spurs' star guard knew the game was over.

Ginobili scored 27 points with seven assists, while Tim Duncan added 20 points and 11 rebounds. Throw in Tony Parker hitting a speedy complement to Ginobili's dazzling exploits, Brian Horan's 3-point shooting from his favorite spot in the corner, along with Robert Horry's effort plays, and this one was all but over by the time the fourth quarter began.

The Pistons did manage to pull within eight points midway through the final quarter, but Ginobili stepped down by drawing fouls on Antonio Daniels and Rasheed Wallace's fifth foul, then starting up with a steal, an assist and several free throws as the lead quickly went back to 20.

Detroit guards Chauncey Billups and Richard Hamilton did next to nothing offensively for the first three quarters, and on defense they were helpless to stop the precision and skillfulness of Parker, the point guard from France, and Ginobili, the shooting guard from Argentina.

Opponents had been averaging less than 86 points against the Pistons in the playoffs, but the Spurs had everything clicking so well that they reached that number with 5:44 left.

Only two teams in NBA history have come back from 2-0 deficits to win a championship, which couldn't have been much of a consuming thought for the Pistons when they bombed their plane after the game and headed back to Detroit.

Game 3 is Tuesday night at the Palace of Auburn Hills, and the Pistons are a long way from where they were a year ago when they split the opening two games in Los Angeles before returning home and doing out the Lakers in five. AP

Ali surprises Tyson before Iron Mike turns into irony

WASHINGTON—Muhammad Ali surprised Mike Tyson with a locker room visit before what became Tyson's final fight, the legend seemingly mourning that Tyson would learn the hard lesson he had about staying in boxing too long.

The magical meeting of legends and Tyson's subsequent retirement blissfully after surrendering to Irish journeyman Kevin McBride following the sixth round, defeat here brought a full circle closure to a boxing era of greatness.

Ali dominated boxing in the 1960s and 1970s while Tyson inherited the throne in the 1980s, but both may stayed in the ring long past their prime. Ali paying a terrible price now by struggling to communicate due to Parkinson's disease.

Just having "The Greatest" watch as Tyson had his gloves strapped on for the final time was enough to leave Tyson mesmerized.

"I'm just overwhelmed this man knows my name. I can't believe he knows who I am," Tyson said. "I first met him as a kid and I've never forgotten it."

Ali was stripped of his title in 1967 for refusing to become a US soldier in Vietnam but won a Supreme Court appeal and reclaimed the crown twice before losing his 1981 farewell to Trevor Berbick.

It was Berbick whom Tyson beat in 1986 to age 20 to become the youngest champion in heavyweight history. Tyson fueled Ali's mind-play skills and paranoia but was "The Baddest Man on the Planet" by overwhelming foes for three years.

Tyson struggled through an emotional breakup with actress-wife Robin Givens and into his ring reign and when 42-1 longshot Buster Douglas knocked him out in Tokyo in 1990, inflicting the first defeat of Tyson's career.

"My career has been over since 1990," Tyson said after losing to McBride. "I don't believe I can beat Father Time." Tyson's downward spiral continued. He was convicted of rape in 1992 for a 1991 incident in Indianapolis involving 18-year-old beauty pageant contestant Desiree Washington. He served three years and returned to boxing in 1995. AFP

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Annika sets new mark; J-Ro bags ₱1.6 million

SEVERN, Md. (GRACE, Maryland—Sweden's Annika Sorenstam became the first woman to claim the same major three years in a row as she won the LPGA Championship and maintained her bid for a season's grand slam on Sunday.

Sorenstam, five shots ahead overnight, fired a final round 72 to finish on 11-under par at the Bulle Rock Golf Course, three shots ahead of 15-year-old American amateur Michelle Wie.

Filipino Jennifer Rosales carded a 74 and teamed up tied from 16th to ninth at 287. The other top Filipino Rosales $21,899 (about P1.6M).

It was the Sweden's ninth career major, her ninth title of the year and her 62nd LPGA victory in 11 years on the Tour.

She is now fifth on the all-time list of major winners behind Patty Berg (15), Mickey Wright (13), Louise Suggs (11) and Babe Zaharias (10).

More importantly to her eyes, it was two out of two in the majors this year and she thanks now has her sights on becoming the first player to win all four in a women's grand slam.

"I felt a lot of pressure today and got a little shaky and very nervous around the end," said the Swede.

"But I want to win all the majors this year. I've worked hard for it and I know I'm now going to be under a lot of pressure at the US Women's Open that begins on Thursday week.

Sorenstam's victory was more comfortable than the margin suggests but it was still a glorious day for Wie, whose 68 left her on eight under with a third top 10 placing in six majors. Reuters

SORENSTAM

Garcia tops Booz Allen golf

TOWSON, Md.—Jorgen Garcia fired a final round six-under par 65 to win the Booz Allen Classic in Towson, Maryland on Sunday and establish himself as one of the favourites for next week's US Open.

The Spaniard finished with a course record-equaling 54-under 270 at the historic Congressional Golf Club to claim a two-stroke victory over defending champion Adam Scott of Australia and Americans Boris Lee Ill and Ben Crane.

The 25-year-old began the day trailing overnight leader Tom Pernice, 36 years his senior, by two shots but remained an early charge with five birdies and an eagle in the opening 10 holes to rocket to the top of the leaderboard.

With his first win of the season in sight, Garcia stumbled to the finish with bogeys on two of the final four holes, including the last, but held on to win the $1 million event.

As he walked up the final fairway the Spaniard admitted "having the ghosts of Nicolette Boating over my head," recalling his dramatic final round collapse when he squandered a six-shot lead and then lost to Vijay Singh in a playoff last month. Reuters

GARCIA

Federer, Sharapova take titles

LONDON—Defending Wimbledon champion Roger Federer and Maria Sharapova will begin the defense of their Grand Slam titles in confident mood next week after climbing to joint world top spot when on Sunday.

Federer, the two-time Wimbledon champion, made it a hat-trick of Stella grasscourt wins beating Australian Open runner-up Marcos Baghdatis 6-4, 6-7 (5/7), 6-4, in the final.

It was the world number one's 29th consecutive win on grass.

In Birmingham, the 18-year-old Sharapova clinched a 6-2, 4-6, 6-1 win over Serbia's Ana Ivanovic to retain her title and claim a 17th consecutive win on grass.

But Serbs did enough to suggest that, despite his own conservations about playing on grass, he can still perform at a high enough level to worry Federer, the man he beat on his way to the Australian Open title in January.

Federer now has to consider the traditional threat from Andy Roddick, last year's Wimbledon runner-up, after the American reached the third Queen's Club title on Sunday. AFP

ENTERTAINMENT

Edito Ronnie O. Velarde

A spark of hope for Pinoy bands

Not all the bands in this recent guitar fest deserve special attention, but they all need encouragement

By Patricia Concepcion
Contributor

TEN years ago, the local band music scene saw its biggest explosion of talents who embraced what came to be known as Pinoy alternative rock.

The term "alternative" here is applied liberally—to make it easy to understand how the Eraserheads, Rivermaya, Wolfgang, the Youth, the Teeth and Parokya ni Edgar, for example, became rock music heir groups of choice in the 1990s, in the same way that Juan de la Cruz, Anak Bayan, Sampaguita, Manila Gallery and Boomerang dominated the '70s.

Granted to the success of these bands was the support of radio stations that gave them previous airplay, especially to the early stages of their careers when all they had were demo songs crudely recorded on cassette tapes.

PHOTO for story

Keeping the spirit

In the '90s, the bands were lucky to have 1.6 105 and NU 107—two FM stations whose DJs truly believed in their music and lobbied to put their songs on the playlist.

In the '70s, there was RJ 888, whose jocks, particularly Rookie Dave, championed the cause of Pinoy rock via the popular "Pinoy Rock & Rhythm" program.

AM and FM are still around, although the former has become an R&B/hip-hop station and thus cannot accommodate the likes of, say, Bamboo and other hot young bands of the moment. 90.7 is hanging on to its pioneering rock FM programming, thanks to iconic Manu Chanayan's youthful spirit.

More, better bands

Which brings us to RJ. In the '90s, it was the same youthful spirit that guarded Ramon Jacinto to pump his own radio station, dzRJ, which eventually soared to the heights of success before Jacinto was forced into exile in the United States following martial law.

Upon his homecoming in '96, Jacinto made up for lost time, taking a direct hand in running RJ AM and FM, and even opening the Metro RJ chain of music clubs. However, support for local bands in his radio stations took a back seat and virtually disappeared, save for that rare a few select artists, including Jacinto's own band, RJ & the Boys, of course.

Whether it was a personal or business decision for Jacinto—he, well, is sure to find the presence and influence of new Pinoy rock artistes can't be ignored. There is an altogether different kind of local bands in the scene, definitely bigger in number and possi-

A-2 PHOTO A-2

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Turn to your bookmark column for newsbriefs by George G. Cahiles and Jil Cruz.

RP to benefit from Japan-China row

HSBC SERVICE CENTER IN RP
Secretary Rongsi Sentiful Gonzalez Amando Tetangco Jr. (second from left), HSBC Group Chief Operating Officer Alan Johnson and Finance Secretary Cesar Purisima break a clay pot in formally open HSBC's Group Service Center in the Philippines. Looking on are HSBC Group Service Center Philippines president David Sutton (left) and British Ambassador Peter Buckingham (right). (See story on page B2.)

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE COUNTRY stands to benefit from the escalating tensions between Japan and China as Japanese investors are planning to move their funds out of China and into countries like the Philippines, according to Trade Secretary Juan Somoza.

"The signal we gathered is that there could be shifting of interest from China to other countries like the Philippines because of the ongoing political situation between Japan and China," Somoza said in an interview after his meeting with Japanese investors last week.

The trade chief met with the Kansai Economic Federation or Kankeiren in Osaka, Japan, last week. Somoza said Kankeiren accounted for about 20 percent of Japanese investments worldwide.

The private, non-profit group counts 866 members from influential business groups in Japan.

He said Japan was a major investor in China. Japan and China celebrate have been strained recently and the escalating tension is affecting diplomatic ties between the two economic giants.

Kankeiren told Philippine trade officials that 80 percent of Japanese investments have undiplomatically gone to China were now looking for alternative sites. Somoza said the Philippines was emerging as a strong option.

Japan is the country's second biggest investor after the United States. In 2004, it poured P26.6 billion into the Philippines, according to Somoza.

In terms of exports, Japan has become the Philippines' biggest market as of last year while it continues to be the second major source of tourist arrivals.

"We are seeing a increasing confidence of Japanese businessmen in the Philippines and they are considering increasing their investments," Somoza noted.

Mining, he added, was an area of particular interest to Japanese investors.

"The Philippines is very serious in developing mining and we told investors that we are overhauling the mindset in the past," the trade chief noted.

While in Japan, Somoza signed a memorandum of agreement with Nagoya Keizai University Hospital that would allow the group to put up a state-of-the-art radiology center in the Philippines.

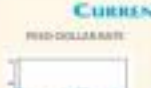
Japanese firm Kobe Steel also announced its intent to invest $8 million to put up a production center in the Philippines that will supply the requirements of its regional clients. Kobe Steel is a supplier to hotels and restaurants.

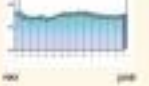
Toko Shoji, which owns more than 50 hospitals in Japan, is also looking at potential investments in the Philippines, added Somoza.

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES

PESO-DOLLAR RATE





GOLD: $423.90-423.40

Country	Unit	Peso Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	54.7305	1.00000	54.7305
Japan	100	0.50914	0.00931	50.9140
United Kingdom	Pound	1.08815	1.98858	108.8150
Hong Kong	Dollar	7.04145	0.12868	7.0415
Switzerland	Franc	43.7262	0.79903	43.7262
Canada	Dollar	43.7262	0.79903	43.7262
Singapore	Dollar	33.4914	0.61200	33.4914
Australia	Dollar	40.5766	0.74140	40.5766
Malaysia	Ringgit	14.3997	0.26312	14.3997
Saudi Arabia	Riyal	14.5815	0.26645	14.5815
Brunei	Dollar	32.0000	0.58475	32.0000
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.00545	0.00010	0.0054
Thailand	Baht	1.34199	0.02452	1.3420
UAE	Dirham	14.8979	0.27220	14.8979
Kuwait	Dinar	177.5155	3.24395	177.5155
Qatar	Riyal	15.0330	0.27470	15.0330
Argentina	Peso	17.8512	0.32618	17.8512
Brazil	Real	23.8968	0.43668	23.8968
Chile	Peso	0.09148	0.00167	0.0915
China	Yuan	6.74214	0.12321	6.7421
India	Rupee	1.24019	0.02266	1.2402
Mexico	Peso	5.03768	0.09204	5.0377
Russia	Ruble	1.90000	0.03472	1.9000
New Zealand	Dollar	37.7806	0.69029	37.7806
Norway	Krone	6.94253	0.12685	6.9425
Sweden	Krona	6.04253	0.11042	6.0425
Denmark	Krone	7.34253	0.13417	7.3425
South Africa	Rand	5.67455	0.10367	5.6745
Kuwait	Metal	0.00000	0.00000	0.0000
Iran	Rial	0.00000	0.00000	0.0000
Taiwan	Dollar	0.00000	0.00000	0.0000

STOCK MARKET

Lackluster trading seen

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX

See main market report on Page B3

WHAT'S INSIDE

Transco, CDC to contain power fluctuations in Clark — B3
Opec seen maintaining production — B4
Zero VAT on power seen to stimulate investments — B5
WB proposing reforms in pension fund system — B5

AMID POLITICAL NOISE

Economic team all set for roadshow

By Michelle V. Rama

THE GOVERNMENT'S economic team is all set for the international roadshow this month, hoping to reassure foreign investors that the Philippines is on track to meet its economic and fiscal targets despite volatility in the political front.

Amid sounds hounding the Arroyo administration, including allegations that the President cheated in the elections and that her family was involved in the illegal jueteng operations, the administration's bankers in the $5 on a dollar level last week. The peso closed at 56.300 to a dollar on Friday.

The recent peso depreciation partly wiped out gains from fiscal reforms and positive developments in the banking industry, which early this year helped the local currency recover from its average of 56.64 to a dollar in 2004.

But Finance Secretary Cesar Purisima, spokesperson of the economic team, said the group was optimistic that the economy would not be substantially hurt by the current political noise. He said the team would tell investors and European investors that the country was still well on track to meet its development targets.

Politics is always a sideplay of things in the Philippines. What's important is that business continues to remain business. We remain bullish about the country," Purisima said in separate interviews after the opening ceremony for the service center of Hong Kong-based Banking Corp. (HSBC).

Purisima said the target of reducing the budget deficit this year to P140 billion or below remained achievable, and government income were still expected to stay healthy.

"Businessmen will see through this noise. The political noise[] only shows that we are a mature democracy. The issues across the board and cleared, she former," he said.

The roadshow, which will run for a week and a half starting June 21, will cover stops in Europe and the United States. The roadshow, which was planned before the controversy hounding the Arroyo administration hogged the limelight, was intended to update foreign investors on positive developments in the fiscal sector.

The roadshow will be led by officials from the Department of Finance and the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.

The updates will include the passage of the value-added tax bill and administrative measures to improve revenue collection, as well as improvements in the government's fiscal health. Last April, the national government posted a one-month budget surplus of P35.1 billion, the first recorded surplus in four years.

Economic officials were hoping the roadshow would pave the way for a positive market response to the government's planned bond issuances before the end of the year, that investors are surprised in question the sustainability of fiscal reforms in the Philippines, considering current political problems caused by calls for President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo to step down.

The government still needs to borrow P830 million from commercial sources this year to complete its $4-billion foreign borrowing requirement for 2005.

Of the $4 billion, $1.1 billion will come from commercial sources through bond floats, while $900 million will be come from official development assistance.

Four Seasons eyes Palawan, Bohol, Cebu

PUBLIC Islands, one of the world's biggest hotel and resort chains, is planning to put up a luxury hotel in one of the Philippines' major tourist destinations, according to Tourism Secretary Joseph Ace Clemens.

The tourism chief said the upscale hotel chain is looking at 66 destinations in the country. It was looking at Cebu, Bohol or Palawan for its first venture in the Philippines.

The entry of Four Seasons as well as the expansion of the likes of Shangri-La Hotel and Discovery Suites will help address the rising shortages in accommodations in the country's major tourist destinations.

Datuin said there were about 24,000 rooms for tourist accommodations all over the country. He projected that by 2007, there would be an additional 11,000 rooms.

"We have a shortage in room capacity. There is now more demand that supply. It has really become a seller's market for our tourism operators, particularly the hotels in key tourist destinations," the tourism chief said.

Datuin said 90 percent of foreign visitors go to Cebu and stay in four and five star hotels. It takes about two years from groundbreaking before a major hotel can start operations.

He said hotels in Metro Manila and in Cebu have been beefing up their supply in factor in the projected increase in arrivals this year to 3 million and to 4 million by 2010.

Shangri-La is expanding its facility in Mactan, Cebu, and is putting up a resort hotel in Boracay.

Shangri-La's Qi Spa will open this month in Cebu. Datuin said this would be the biggest spa facility in Southeast Asia. He said Shangri-

(TURN TO B2)

WORKERS pour concrete on the first pillar of the North Triangle Depot Commercial Center, the future super-regional mall and inter-modal transport hub in Quezon City.

Ayala starts construction of North Triangle Depot mall

NORTH Triangle Depot Commercial Corp. (NTDCC), a consortium led by Ayala Land Inc. (ALI), has started construction activities for a commercial center in the North Triangle Depot of MRT3 in ceremonies that saw the pouring of concrete on the first pillar of the future super-regional mall.

The project will involve the development of an integrated retail space with around 284,000 square meters of gross leasable area – a major component of ALI's experience in shopping center operations, and will incorporate new concepts and special zones that will make it a new mall category.

Aside from Ayala Land, NTDCC's other shareholders include Anglo-Phil Holdings Corp., Rustans Inc., Bonifacio Holdings Inc., GBH Inc. and Alliance Realty and Development Corp. (non-owned) Development Bank of the Philippines and Stael Commercial Banking Corp. provided a P3-billion loan to partially finance the construction of the project.

ALI said that executed in the same mall was its 42nd connection to the MRT-3 North Avenue station. The mall will also have a new public concourse terminal to be developed within the depot site to accommodate various other modes of public commuting. These will make the commercial center a major inter-

(TURN TO B2)

Independence they

DON'T love is our language, even after the rah-rah-rah of this new administration during the Independence Day celebration, we still have seen every organization about our unskilled-less-poor investment in Equitable PCI Bank.

After all, our pension funds SSS and GSIS poured into the bank only $45 billion of our retirement money, and we have nothing to show for it.

Bawal na word going around in banking, one of the so-called "independent" directors is telling everybody that he will go straight to Glorietta in Makati ating.

The director was said to be in exact looks-like of former foreign affairs Secretary Roberto Romulo, who claims to sit on the board as one of four "independent" directors.

If that is true, that the "independent" director is threatening to go straight to Glorietta, he must be sending a message to the other board members, particularly those from the SSS and the GSIS.

And the message is that he is really close—as in "face-to-face-it's-nasal-to"-close—to Glorietta.

To take it further, the other government guys should better behave and do as he tells them. Look, hoo, it's up if she will just see him anytime...Something like that!

Believe me, not even the three-in guys in Makisaktang, who already know everything Glorietta does, claim to be, well, as "rub-bing-elbows" close in fact, that they could already visit her mother.

***

BASEL on whispers in the corridors of Equitable PCI, the "independent" director is after this takeover named Pulgencio Bermejo Jr., himself a former Cabinet member.

Pantoja sits on the board of the bank as a representative of the government. He has been critical of what he had called the Go family's "vise-like grip" on the bank.

And that, mind you, despite the fact that the Go family only owns 25 percent of the bank, as against the close to 40-percent holdings of the SSS and the GSIS!

For the sake of the series may in the house, the Go family and their "allies" in the board, who are masquerading as "independent" directors, are locked in a battle royale with the SSS and the GSIS for control of the bank.

Pantoja and company were trying to prevent the Go group from getting more seats on the board than the Go family was entitled to, based on their 25 percent holdings.

Personally, Pantoja has put on record some of his observations, and of course objections, regarding the Go group's "dirty tactics" in the election of board members. Of particular interest to Pantoja was the Go group's moves to unload—again—the directors of the new board during the annual stockholders meeting this July.

And that's why our beloved "independent" director, who looks exactly like Bob Romulo, is said to be after Pantoja's head.

Supposedly, he is asking Glorietta personally to make Pantoja shut up, or something bad like that, which is of course "bad" for us, the hapless members of the SSS and the GSIS.

It is, however, very very good for the Go family!

***

BASEL, anyway, word already reached some officials of the SSS and the GSIS that an "independent" director also personally called up Finance Secretary Cesar Purisima.

The Finance Secretary, for the sake of Lito and Boog, as the Cabinet member in charge of both the SSS and the GSIS.

News broke out that, this time, with him at Finance, Purisima wants the government-run pension funds SSS and GSIS to get all their seven seats on the board.

Romulo reportedly called up Purisima, insisting that the government was only entitled to five board seats.

Now if I know this guy Purisima, he is not easily cowed by "independent" directors, no matter their pedigree. He will fight for what is right and just regarding our investments in Equitable PCI.

In the first place, Glorietta herself has no love lost for the Go family. They were only able to muscle their way into our pension funds—some P16 billion in all—during the time of the man named Raul ... We're Sacred.

Why will the beleaguered Glorietta, if she is not crazy or all, want to favor the Go family over the SSS and the GSIS?

Is she willing to risk our funds, perhaps for the sake of an "independent" director who is said to have been dropping her name more often than Wall Raul has been dropping his pants?

***

IF THE REPORTS are true, and the "independent" director is selling guys over at the Equitable PCI board about his forthcoming visit to Glorietta, I sense a lot of confidence in the man.

Does the "independent" director have an "ace"? Well, the uncharitable word going around is that Glorietta's favorite "benefactor" associated with the "independent" director.

That, as I said, is the wicked word going around. For all we know, somebody is just using that special moniker of the First Family, and if that is to be believed, the press person is actually to complain as an enemy.

But the real question is, with scandal after scandal thrown at the doorstep of the GMA administration, can Glorietta still afford to involve another member of the First Family, particularly if it is a suspicious nine-iron on pension money—only P16 billion of it?

***

LEST it or not, if Glorietta does not say it, thereby preserving the SSS and the GSIS from exercising their rights as stockholders of Equitable PCI, the battle for control of the board will be fought in the legal arena—not in Malacañang.

And on that score, from what I gathered, the government side is rather confident of giving the Go group a good fight.

For instance, the government side already made some noise about the "corporate secretary" who is a

(CONTINUED ON B2)

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Bautol III

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DBP Development Bank of the Philippines

First Metro Investment Corporation
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Construction of mall . . .

(From page B1)

modal transport hub and public convergence point in Quezon City, Ali said.

"The benefits of this project go beyond shopping and commuting conveniences for many Filipinos," said Jaime I. Ayala, ALI president and CEO. Ali said. "The commercial center will provide livelihood to hundreds of merchants and employment to thousands of workers, as well as further encourage the flourishing of communities—one of the main engines of economic growth—in this section of Quezon City. With a primary trade area that at present covers 1.3 million residents, the future super-regional shopping, food, and entertainment center will allow NTEC to enable life better for more Filipinos."

Four Seasons . . .

(From page B1)

La would apply the same concept in Boracay.

Boracay Isalso has also announced plans to put up a hotel in the popular beach destination.

Having said he was confident that problems in Boracay about land ownership would be resolved soon so as not to turn away potential investors, Tesoro, along the 4-kilometer strip covering the white beach area are facing ownership problems.

But Tesoro said these in the upper areas of Boracay like Fernways and Blue Waves as well as the site that Shangri-La had chosen were titled and did not have problems on ownership.

Four Seasons already operates in 16 destinations in Asia. It has two hotels each in Bali, Indonesia; Tokyo; Thailand and Singapore and one each in Jakarta, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Taipeh and Shanghai.

Prior Tesoros said it has more than 30 properties under development. Clarissa F. Batino

Transco, CDC to contain power fluctuations in Clark

By Abigail L. Ho

THE NATIONAL Transmission Corp. (Transco) and the Clark Development Corp. are working on a "game plan" that would contain power fluctuations in the economic zone and encourage locators to set up shop there.

Alan Ortiz, Transco president and chief executive, said irregular voltages in the Clark economic zoned power fluctuations that had investors shying away from the area.

Most locators in the Clark Special Economic Zone operate power intensive facilities that require adequate power supply at stable voltages, Ortiz explained.

The power fluctuations now taking place in the area have prevented existing locators from expanding their operations and prevented potential investors from locating there, he added.

For this reason, he said, Transco and the CDC have prepared a "game plan" to improve the power situation in the economic zone.

"We'll meet again and submit to President Macapagal-Arroyo a viable plan to deal with (the problem)," Ortiz told the INQUIRER.

Apart from the CDC, Transco is also actively coordinating with officials of the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority, through power distributor Subic Enercore Corp., to ensure stable power supply at the seaport.

Two months ago, Transco signed a P20.4-million agreement with the shipyard Subic Enercore Corp., which allowed the latter to purchase sub-transmission assets in Subic Bay and Olongapo City.

Also included in the purchase agreement are the sub-transmission switchgears at the Kalaklan Motoring Point in Olongapo City.

Jaime Jose Abutbul, Subic Enercore president, said during the April 28 signing ceremonies that the power distributor was "bullish" on the growth potential of the Subic Freeport and the Olongapo area.

Subic Enercore is also keen on acquiring some of Transco's 300 megawatt-output substations in the area.

Subic Enercore is investing in sub-transmission assets in preparation for the entry of new locators as well as for the eventual operation of the Subic port project.

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Developing 77 to talk economy, UN reform in Qatar

UNITED NATIONS—The Group of 77 plus China will take up UN reform and measures to strengthen their developing economies this week in Doha, Qatar, their first meeting in five years.

Leaders from the 132 countries now in the G-77, as the 10-year alliance of developing states is called, will discuss South-South partnerships, North-South relations and UN reform at the June 15-16 summit, said an official for the group who asked not to be named.

The G77 is the largest Third World coalition, tackling economic development since its founding in 1964.

Borrowing some of its members, such as Brazil, India and associate member China, have become rising economic forces on the world stage.

The official said the group hoped to "come up with substantial consensus" on UN reform, adding that reform should "take into account the interests of the South."

Indeed, how G77 members, India and Brazil, are vying for permanent seats on an expanded UN Security Council is in effect with Germany and Japan.

However, India's rival and a G77 member, Pakistan, has publicly denounced the plan.

Despite the gamut of economic interests in the G-77, which uses the gamut from powerhouses like Malaysia and Saudi Arabia to the tiny economies of Zambia and Mali, the official insisted the coalition's biased on solidarity.

"Yet there are 132 countries, with different levels of development," he said. "But I think there is a common denominator in that we all agree that we need to be unified to face the challenges of globalization," he said.

The thirteen meeting five years ago was the first summit to gather heads of state since the group's creation 41 years ago and reflected a shift in global politics, said the official.

"The world has changed since the Cold War," he said. "For the South to be taken seriously into account, we needed to raise the level of communication." AFP

Opec seen maintaining high production level at meeting

VIENNA—Opec will opt to keep pumping oil at its highest level in 25 years when the cartel meets in Vienna this week, in order to satisfy high demand forecasts for the end of the year, analysts believe.

They say ministers from the 11-member Organization for Petroleum Exporting Countries are likely to increase their production quotas to legitimize the current output.

The ministers are due to meet at the Opec headquarters in Vienna on Wednesday to plot their production strategy for the second half of the year.

Ismail Cid Sheriff Al-Hosni, said, whose country is the only one that can still significantly increase production, said on Saturday that Opec would raise its output by 500,000 barrels per day (bpd).

That prospect, which would bring the production ceiling up to 28 million, was raised last week by Opec's current president, Kuwait's ahmad Fahd al-Sabah.

"This is the main proposal on the table, but other members of the organization may of course make other suggestions," a source close to Opec told AFP.

"We probably need to make a decision to add to the cartel's production ceiling, which is set at 25.5 million bpd, without counting Iraq."

Baghdad is excluded from the quota system, but if its petroleum is added to the rest, Opec's production would exceed 30 million bpd.

It is the cartel's highest level since October 2004 and close to the record high of 1980.

After prices last week briefly topped the $55-dollar per barrel mark, Paudeyn promised "We do what we can to moderate prices."

The oil price was made a scapegoat on Saturday by US leaders during talks in London, who said they feared that sustained high oil prices were stunting global economic growth.

But analysts believe that an increase of half a million barrels per day will not have a significant impact on the price of crude oil, which has been hovering around 50 dollars for the past few months. AFP

Norway's Crown Prince Haakon Magnus (L) and visiting Saudi Arabian Minister of Petroleum and Mineral Resources Ali al-Naimi talk in a garden outside the Sokkelstyret Hotel. Al-Naimi said on Saturday he supported a 500,000 barrel per day rise in Opec's output ceiling and that current prices above $50 a barrel were "too high" and should be brought down. AFP/File

AIRBUS A380 pilot Jacques Rosay waves at Le Bourget airport, few minutes after the giant plane landed near Paris. An Airbus A380 aircraft landed for the first time at a Paris airport on Sunday, arriving at Le Bourget ahead of the biennial Paris Air Show. The giant aircraft, which flew for the first time on April 27, is expected to be the star attraction at the show, making several demonstration flights for the public. AFP

US government maintains crackdown on corporate fraud

WASHINGTON—In a new strategy against crooked corporations, the Justice Department is allowing them to avoid prosecution in exchange for information about discussions between employees and company lawyers.

The disclosures of communications that typically are confidential gives companies the chance to escape with fines and the promise of internal changes. At the same time, prosecutors gain valuable information in pursuing criminal cases against executives who may have been responsible for inflated revenues and other corporate misdeeds.

Defense lawyers, however, say the new compromises the rights of individual defendants.

The cooperation helps companies avoid what former officials call "collateral damage" in corporate fraud cases—the loss of jobs, investments and pensions—that can accompany the filing of criminal charges.

The change in tactics is motivated in part by the government's experience in the Arthur Andersen case.

Some 28,000 people lost their jobs after the accounting firm was convicted in 2002 of destroying documents in the Enron scandal.

In a largely symbolic victory for the all but dissolved institution, the Supreme Court on May 31 overturned the verdict, ruling the jury had not been properly instructed.

But in pressing for the companies to waive the attorney-client privilege, the government is taking away the rights of individual defendants, criminal defense lawyers say.

"What it does is creates an environment within a company where nobody can feel comfortable seeking legal advice from a lawyer because you can't have any assurance sometime down the road that the company isn't going to waive the attorney-client privilege," said Daniel Zonana, a former federal prosecutor.

The issue is representing Stephen Richards, a former executive in Computer Associates International Inc. of Islandia, New York, who stands accused of securities fraud and obstruction of justice.

The government decided to put off prosecuting the company, which makes software, and encourage systems for large businesses, and focused instead on company leaders such as Richards.

Computer Associates agreed in September to pay $225 million to stave off criminal charges in a multibillion-dollar securities fraud. The company employs more than 23,000 people.

In the past year, the government also has deferred corporate fraud prosecutions of AIG, and American International Group, and criminal charges against Monsanto Co. and Millenium Pharmaceuticals Inc. Issues that involved illegal bribes of foreign officials.

Top Justice Department officials embraced the idea of deferred prosecutions several months after Andersen's conviction.

A January 2003 memo from then-Deputy Attorney General Larry Thompson to US attorneys signaled the change. The memo said prosecutors should consider the corporation's cooperation in criminal cases against individuals could be applied to corporations. AP

Japan Q1 growth revised down, seen slowing ahead

TOKYO—Japan's economy grew less briskly than initially estimated in the first three months of 2005, as concern grew that economic slowdown in exports and production may cool the pace further in the coming quarters.

Revised data on Monday showed gross domestic product (GDP) grew a real, or price-adjusted, 1.2 percent in the January-March quarter, down from a preliminary reading of 1.3 percent growth and economists' consensus forecast for a 1.4 percent rise.

The quarter in January-March after three quarters of virtually no growth came mainly from a rise in inventories and from pent-up consumer demand due to natural disasters and poor weather late last year.

But economists expect the economy to stand still for some time, as exports are unlikely to grow much with markets like China slowing down and as corporate activity drops in response.

"Growth in the second quarter will be much slower than the first quarter, when we still had a five percent annualized growth rate, which is not going to happen every quarter," said Peter Morgan, senior economist at HSBC Securities.

"The early indications from things like industrial production are that output will be much flatter."

Separate data on Monday showed industrial production rose 1.8 percent in April from a month earlier on a seasonally adjusted basis, revised down from a initial 2.2 percent rise.

"Given a growing building of inventories due to slack demand, particularly from overseas, I expect output to be slightly negative in April-June," said Yasu Saito, senior economist at SG Research Institute. Industrial output grew 1.7 percent in January-March.

On an annualized basis, GDP expanded 4.9 percent, compared with an initial estimate for a 5.3 percent rise and economists' median forecast of a 5.6 percent gain. Its nominal terms, it grew 0.6 percent from the previous quarter.

For the fiscal year 2004/05 ended in March, GDP grew 1.9 percent, slightly short of a government projection for 2.1 percent expansion.

The yen was little changed on the data, hovering at around 108.00 to the dollar. The Nikkei share price index ended up 0.38 percent. Bonds showed little reaction as the data confirmed in many investors that Japan's economy remained on a moderate recovery path.

Capital spending in the quarter was revised higher to a rise of 2.4 percent from an initial 2.0 percent, while growth in private consumption was revised down to 1.3 percent from 1.5 percent.

But private-sector inventories contributed 0.3 percentage point to GDP growth, revised down from 0.4 point. That largely accounted for the slightly downward revision in the headline figure, the government said.

External demand, or net exports, lopped 0.1 percentage point off GDP growth, underscoring sluggishness in key markets for Japanese goods, such as the United States and China.

Data last week showed Japan's trade surplus rose for the fourth straight month in April as oil prices pushed up prices of imports and offset solid growth in exports. Reuters

HSBC puts up global service center in Alabang's Northgate

By Doris C. Dumlao

EXECUTIVES of the political scene now watching the Philippines, British banking giant HSBC yesterday opened a 2,000-seat global center for back-room service operations in Alabang.

The 165,000-square foot facility at the Northgate Cyberzone shall be the position center for HSBC's eighth such global center. The bank operates similar hubs in mainland China, India, Malaysia and Sri Lanka.

Alan Jebson, HSBC Group chief operating officer, said in a briefing that the British bank was undeterred by the current political tension in the country, arising from charges of election fixing and illegal gambling payoffs, which involved President Macapagal-Arroyo and her family.

HSBC has been in markets like the Philippines and China for over a century, and is used to occasional political upheavals, he said.

"This [political turmoil] has no effect on our business," Jebson said.

Finance Secretary Cesar Purisima said he was confident that investors, like HSBC, would look past the current disturbances, and keep the government's economic agenda on track.

He said HSBC and other long-term investors were vexing with their finance on the Philippines' at being an emerging, fundamentals.

The local hub employs 1,000 people and is expected to hire 1,000 more by the end of this year. It handles call center operations, steady credit card customer care services for the bank's clients in the United Kingdom and United States. It shall soon service the group's desktop publishing requirements.

Compared to the cost of operating similar hubs elsewhere, Jebson said the move was more expensive to put up such a facility than India but less expensive than in China.

The average investment he said translates to the Philippines ranges between $5,000 to $6,000 per seat. Each seat, which employs one hours a day, translates to 1.4 person equivalent employment.

Zero VAT on power seen to stimulate investments

By Abigail L. Ho

RELAXING a zero value-added tax rating on power and fuel generated through renewable sources should encourage potential investors to invest in the sector as well as compel consumers to use fossil fuels made of fuels, according to Energy Secretary Vincent Perez.

Under Section 8 of the expanded VAT law, a zero percent VAT rating is imposed on the "sale of power or fuel generated through renewable sources of energy such as, but not limited to, biomass, solar, wind, hydropower, geothermal, ocean energy and other emerging energy sources using technologies such as fuel cells and hydrogen fuels."

Perez said this was a welcome development, particularly with the government's thrust to achieve 60 percent energy self-sufficiency by 2013.

"We hope that more players will invest in developing our untapped renewable energy resources because one way to energy self-sufficiency and advance our push towards energy independence," he said.

Only power and fuel generated through renewable sources are exempt from the VAT on power and fuel. Those using fossil fuels and even natural gas are slapped with a 10-percent VAT.

Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla said in an earlier interview that the imposition of the VAT on fossil fuels should encourage consumers to conserve energy.

"The additional VAT should encourage more use petroleum products more efficiently," he said. "The makes renewable energy projects more affordable in terms of prices."

In May 2005, the Department of Energy launched a comprehensive Renewable Energy Policy Framework, which was touted as one of the best national renewable energy policies in the world during the May 2004 Ministerial Conference on Renewable Energy held in Germany.

Breaktime

From page B1

young lawyer named Nilda Divina.

The government directors in the board questioned the "rocket-like" promotion of the young Divina. He has become an EVP in record time, known among the board members as the "fastest rise" in the history of Philippine banking.

At the same time, while the lawyer serves the board as the corporate secretary, he is also the chief legal counsel of the bank, not to mention owning significant shares of the bank.

You name, him, the guy down just beat the bank for all those positions and all those jobs, in the process getting paid from out of the retirement funds of the guys down here in my hearings."

Pichay said that in the spirit of the government representatives on the board, and that's why they tried to block his last promotion. No dice!

Apparently, the promotion is the reward from the Go family. Incensed him, as it seems that his interests are not being represented, particularly those against the Go family were missing from the minutes of the board meeting.

AT THE CENTER of the legal issues are the actions taken so far by two of the bank, as a corporation, which were initiated by the Go group, the "independent" directors included.

One of them is a drastic change in the way the board approves the "nominations" on the new board, done every year before the annual stockholders meeting.

The nominations come from a nominations, which supposedly screens the qualifications of nominations, such as the appointees the SEC and the CGSS.

Based on the by-laws, the decision of the committee cannot be questioned in the annual stockholders meeting. Thus, only the board can actually do anything about the decision of the committee.

To overturn or approve the decisions of the nomination committee, the present by-laws require a two-thirds vote.

So the Go family-initiated amendment to the by-laws, made a number of changes, including a "simple majority."

The government side, of course, opposed the amendments before the SEC, which ruled in the government's favor. The Go family then went to the Court of Appeals.

The content of the SEC and the CGSS becomes obvious, actually, when you look at the actual numbers, and not just the percentage of votes.

It is a 15-man board, for one, and by sheer classification, supported by the "independent" directors, the Go family got "nine" votes, versus the only "five" seats they are entitled to, according to their holdings.

But to get board approval for the decision of the powerful nomination committee, and thus have their way in the board election again, the Go family will need 13 votes.

As I said, the family is assured of only "nine" votes, including the votes of the four "independent" directors. Again, they are supposed to be the independent directors. What's that — independence they?

And that's why they want to change the governance of the by-laws to a "simple majority." That's just right.

And that, ladies and gentlemen in my harangue, was just the latest episode in the long story about our investment money in the bank — all P16 billion of it.

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EUROPEAN UNION
DELEGATION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION TO THE PHILIPPINES

Small Projects Facility Call for Proposals 2005

The Delegation of the European Commission to the Philippines is seeking proposals for small projects in the Philippines, to receive financial assistance from the EC-Philippines Economic Cooperation Small Projects Facility programme of the European Communities.

The full Guidelines for Applicants are available at the Delegation of the European Commission to the Philippines, 30/F Tower II, PSBC Plaza, 8674 Ayala Ave. corner Sen Puyat Ave., 1200 Makati City, Tel.: (+63-2) 759 0700, Fax: (+63-2) 759 0799, and on the following Internet site: http://www.delphl.cec.eu.int/.

Deadline for submission of proposals is Monday 12 September 2005 at 16:00.

The Small Projects Facility (SPF) is a grant programme designed to support the on-going reform and modernization of the Philippine economy, while increasing mutual awareness between the European Union and the Philippines. Specifically, the SPF funds short-term but high-impact projects. Projects funded under the SPF contribute towards a result-oriented dialogue or strategic cooperation in economic development and governance. Furthermore, each SPF project comprises a European dimension: this may consist of, without being limited to, partnership with a European organization, reference to European experiences, use of European expertise or technology.

Only Philippine-based, Not-for-Profit Organizations are eligible for funding under this facility: governmental or non-governmental organizations, local authorities, business associations, universities, research institutes, think-tanks, etc.

Proposals focusing on the following themes will be given priority:

1. EU-Philippines economic relations
   - Philippine exports to Europe: enhancing competitiveness, developing niche markets
   - Assistance to help comply with EU requirements particularly food safety requirements; good manufacturing practices; hygiene; consumer protection
   - EU Enlargement: Opportunities and challenges for trade, investment and finance
   - Enhancing competitiveness of the Philippines for European investment
   - Promoting investment in non-metropolitan areas
   - Implementation of the Philippine Export Development Plan, with focus on access to European markets
   - Improving the investment climate for EU Foreign Direct Investment
   - Tapping EU best practice in economic regulation/economic governance (examples: competition policy, consumer safety)
2. Corporate governance
   - Corporate social environmental responsibility
   - Support to Corporate watchdogs
   - Promoting financial transparency in private corporations
3. Good governance
   - Promoting transparency in local and central government, monitoring of public expenditure
   - Participatory planning in LGUs (ex.: land use plans, development plans, etc.)
   - ICT for Good Governance: implementing policies, drafting up and disseminating best practices (ex. e-procurement, GIS for planning and management, etc.)
   - Support to fight against graft and corruption
   - Millennium Development Goals monitoring mechanisms in Local Governments
   - Public finance reforms
4. Media productions on all the above themes

Apart from the quality of their design, projects will be selected for their likelihood to produce an impact in policy issue and to offer models for best practices, as well as their potential for creating links between the Philippines and the EU, and serving mutual interests of both partners.

Implementation of activities must not extend beyond 12 months.

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The HP Proliant ML350 server bundle contains one Xeon DP/EM4T processor running at 3.2 GHz, 1 MB L2 cache, 1 GB of memory and 4-bay 36GB hot-plug hard disks. It is priced at Php 130,000.

- The HP Proliant ML370 server bundle contains one Xeon DP/EM4T processor running at 3.2 GHz, 4 GB of memory and 6-bay 146GB hot-plug hard disks. It is priced at Php 300,000.
- The HP Proliant DL380 rack-optimized server bundle contains one Xeon DP/EM4T processor running at 3.2 GHz, 1 MB L2 cache, 1 GB of memory, Smart Array 6400 controller and three 72GB 10K RPM hot-plug hard disks. It is priced at Php 180,000.
- The HP Proliant DL580 rack-optimized server bundle contains one Xeon MP 3.0+ GHz processor (upgrade-ready to four), 1MB cache, 1GB of memory, Smart Array 6400 controller and one 72GB 15K RPM hot-plug hard disk. It is priced at Php 625,000.

Promo will run until June 30, 2005. For more information, please call the HP Contact Center at 867-3507 or Toll-free 1 800 1 441 4488 or email: ph.contact@hp.com.

hp invent

BUSINESS

DTI unit to invest in ₱10-B SLEX upgrade

By Cielo G. Balinas

STATE-OWNED National Development Co. is planning to induce equity into the ₱10-billion upgrade of the South Luzon Expressway to finance the development of the Subic economic corridor, airport-bypass Trade Secretary Juan Santos.

The trade chief said the plan was to strengthen the road network linking North Luzon to South Luzon to facilitate the movement of goods and people in the area covered.

The development of the Luzon network involves the completion of the Subic/Tarlac road, upgrading of the airport in Pampanga, development of an airport in Batangas, and the enhancement of the international port in Batangas City.

The trade chief said Mukaden MD Capital could be a likely partner in the SLEX upgrade.

The Malaysian firm acquired last month a 45 percent stake in Hopewell Crown Infrastructure Corp., the group originally tasked to do the SLEX rehabilitation.

The trade secretary said NDC was challenging its plans on the SLEX upgrade together with another state agency, the Philippine National Construction Corp. NDC and PNCC are both headed by Arthur Aquino.

Santos said these government agencies would have to undertake the project with a private partner. NDC will raise most funds to raise funds for its investment in SLEX.

The goal, he said, was to complete at least two of the major components of the SLEX upgrade—the rehabilitation of the Balintang viaduct and the construction of SLEX to the Southern Tagalog Arterial Road (STAR)—by 2006.

"The Malaysian group is one of the pre-existing interested partners. But we are still finalizing the terms with PNCC," said the trade chief. The NCC is the infrastructure arm of the trade department.

Hopewell Crown president Joel Ibañez said that forced on initial discussions, NDC was planning to invest about ₱2 billion in the project.

The idea, Ibañez said, was for the state investment arm to put money in South Luzon Tollway Corp., the 30-20 joint venture between Hopewell Crown and PNCC. The company will operate the SLEX tollway.

Initially, the NDC will take care of the money needed to acquire the right-of-way. Ibañez said the government would need between P400 million and P800 million for this.

Santos said about P1 billion would be needed to expand the Balintang viaduct.

"We have to connect SLEX to Lipa and all the way to the Batangas port. At the same time, we want to complete the Subic-Clark-Tarlac road as well as other infrastructure projects in Central and North Luzon," he explained.

Santos said he has Bernardo airport still support the growth of Clark airport. The two should help boost trade and tourism in North Luzon.

In Lipa, he said the government could develop the Bernardo military airbase. The plan is to use half of which for commercial purposes while maintaining half for military purposes.

"We can develop the Lipa air base into a commercial window to Bicutan airport," said Santos.

VAT measure seen to drive up prices of canned goods

By Christine A. Gaglicia

THE RETAIL prices of canned meat products, including corned beef, meat loaf and hotdogs, are expected to increase by 5 to 10 percent once the new value-added tax measure takes effect at the end of the month.

Consumers are bound to have enough time, according to Dale Talandong, president of the Philippine Association of Meat Processors Inc. (Pampi).

Talandong pointed out that the purchasing power of consumers continues to go down. Thus, the newly imposed VAT would further erode their buying power, he added.

Also, most processing firms will have to increase the prices of their products as the VAT increase will affect all aspects of production, said Talandong, who is also president of Virginia Foods Corp.

During an interview, Talandong explained that Pampi member companies could no longer hold off increases to their prices, citing the impact of the new VAT rate on fuel and electricity costs, imported raw materials and packages.

"The large meat processing firms have been keeping their prices down in the past, but this time, it may not be possible with ... the imposed VAT increase," he told the Inquirer. "There will have significant impact on our costs."

He added that some of the members have sought new forays to address labor costs.

"In the Visayas Region for instance, the meat processors would have to be factored in," Talandong said.

He said that member-companies are still evaluating their competitiveness because the new increase would vary for every product line.

"We would want to impose a very minimal increase because we are afraid we may run their lives out-dated," he said.

The decline in the purchasing power of Filipinos have resulted in limited purchases since last year, according to a recent study commissioned by the meat processing industry.

Talandong said that from an average purchase of three to five canned products a month, consumers have opted to limit their buys to two cans.

WB proposing reforms in pension fund system

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE WORLD Bank said the pension funds systems in the Philippines, Korea and Thailand would likely be debt-ridden in the next 15-20 years if imbalances between contributions and benefits were not corrected.

In a study entitled "Old Age Income Support in the 21st Century: An International Perspective on Pension Systems and Reform," the bank said these three countries had pension fund systems that were not supported by the economic system.

The study released in May noted that these countries had "relatively luxurious" Defined-Economic Corporation and Development-style pensions schemes that designed without the proper linkage with cost finance.

"Although these systems are in a strong financial position when measured in cash terms, the high implicit pension debt will manifest itself in the next 15 to 20 years if reforms are not undertaken soon," the study said.

It said policy-makers in Korea and Thailand had long recognized the problems with the current design. They have attempted to reduce the benefit level and increase the contribution rate but the measures fell short of reaching a sustained contribution-benefit link.

"Given the recent stagnant growth and a pervasive hesitation to deep cost cuts, the Philippine system is particularly in need of a strategy that will permit better risk management to ensure financial sustainability and the ability to withstand shocks, be they economic, demographic, or political," the study said.

It particularly referred to the contributory service requirement of only 10 years for private sector employees in the Philippines to qualify for pension benefits as compared to 22 years in other countries.

Members with 15 credited years of service are eligible to receive at least ₱1,200 monthly pension from the Social Security System while those with 20 credited years are entitled to ₱2,400 a month.

For government employees, whose pension fund is the Government Service Insurance System, the minimum requirement is a bit longer at 15 years.

The study noted that almost all of the economies in East Asia operate separate pension schemes for public and private sector workers, except for Hong Kong, where civil servants hired since 2000 participate in a mandatory provident fund with a top-up arrangement.

ENVIRONMENT and Natural Resources Secretary Michael Defensor (left) confers with Philippine Wood Producers Association (PWPA) president Antonio Diaz at the start of the two-day Philippine Forestry Development Forum held recently at the Asian Development Bank. The forum was attended by 360 representatives from business, academe, international institutions, and local and national government officials.

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Listed firms' profit up 51%

NET earnings of Philippine Stock Exchange-listed companies soared 51 percent to ₱16.75 billion in the first quarter of the year from ₱24.31 billion in the same period last year.

The top gainers during the period were Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co., Ayala Corp., and Globe Telecom Inc.

PLDT reported a net profit of ₱4.4 billion, a 66 percent increase from ₱5.7 billion in the same period last year. This was attributed to shareholders' gain on sale of investments, lower foreign exchange losses and lower operating expenses.

Ayala Corp. reported a consolidated net income of ₱4.3 billion, up from ₱2.1 billion in the same period last year. This was due to strong earnings contribution from key operating subsidiaries, particularly Bank Land Inc., Bank of the Philippine Islands and Globe. This was further enhanced by the one-time capital gains from the sale of shares in Philippine Long Distance and AEL.

Globe, for its part, posted ₱3 billion in net profit, a slight increase from the ₱2.9 billion recorded in the same period last year. The growth in revenues was offset by an increase in operating costs due to higher marketing expenses and costs related to network expansion.

The 30 companies comprising the PSE Composite Index reported a cumulative net profit of ₱27.99 billion, accounting for 70 percent of the total net profit. This represents a 48 percent increase from year-ago level.

"The developments demonstrates that the Philippine equities market is sound and healthy," said SSE president and CEO Francis Lim.

"This excellent performance in the corporate front, coupled with the rising of good news such as the higher than expected GDP growth, the strengthening of the peso and the investors friendly direction of the Supreme Court on the mining industry as well as the recently-awarded BOT Law, slowly shows that the country has excellent fundamentals," Lim added.

The commercial and industrial (C-I) sector's net income ranged by 29 percent to ₱16.85 billion from ₱13.05 billion. This accounted for 69 percent of the total net income of listed companies.

The holding sub-sector recorded the highest increase of 100 percent or ₱9.34 billion from ₱2.04 billion, account ing for 20 percent of the C-I sector's net income. The commercial sub-sector, which accounted for 33 percent of the C-I sector's net income, expanded by 69 percent to ₱14.02 billion from ₱8.30 billion.

In the meantime, the food, beverage and tobacco sub-sector, accounting for 12 percent of the C-I sector, posted an earnings decline of 8 percent to ₱3.14 billion from ₱3.41 billion. Seven out of nine sub-sectors registered increases. A percent of C-I sector, fell 31 percent to ₱252.64 million from ₱366 million, while oil hotel, recreation and other services sub-sector, 6.11 percent of C-I sector, posted a 44 percent decline to earnings to ₱26 million from ₱49 million.

NET INCOME (in billions of pesos)

	NET INCOME		% change	% contribution
	2005	2004		
BANKING AND FINANCIAL SERVICES	3.09	2.25	37.5	18.5
Banks	2.92	2.28		
Financial Services	0.46	(0.03)		
COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL	16.85	13.05	29.1	69.8
Communications	4.42	4.36		
Construction & Other Related Products	(0.08)	0.28		
Food, Beverages and Tobacco	3.14	3.41		
Holding	9.28	2.04		
Hotel, Recreation and Other Services	0.26	0.49		
Manufacturing, Distribution and Trading	(0.29)	(0.34)		
Power, Energy and Other Utilities	(0.22)	1.08		
Transportation Services	0.16	0.13		
Wet Shares Of Foreign Companies	0.28	0.14		
MINING	0.18	(0.03)	683.3	0.1
OIL	0.00	0.08	1,200.0	1.4
PROPERTY	3.30	2.24	47.3	8.9
SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES	(0.08)	(0.02)	400.0	(0.0)
CUMULATIVE NET INCOME	16.75	24.31	51.0	

WHAT 'being fit' really means /C4

LIFESTYLE

A PRACTICAL approach to self-defense, Krav Maga teaches one how to function under shock of a sudden, violent encounter

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Krav Maga to the rescue

By Rina A. Jiménez-David
Photos by Rudy Esparas

BE QUICK and be gone. When life or property is threatened (and provided), a self-defense encounter must not take longer than 20 seconds. Beyond that one must be prepared for a physically—and mentally—demanding fight.

It is vital, therefore, to first take control (literally—by a knife-control it), execute a counterattack and leave the scene. Raw array of necessary, [illegible] physical and mental.

Such is the basic principle of Krav Maga, the official hand-to-hand combat system of the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) that has been adapted to civilian self-defense specialties for [illegible] military. Krav Maga is the military in the

(More C)

PEACHY Vasuvalan, Ramon Monasca and Lorraine Schuck

BOMBO Quisumbing, Marivic Young and husband Hubert Lim

BEAUTIES in screw jean Chua, Rachel Sequera and Hazel Tiongson

HOTSHOTS Sassy Barrios, Rudy Salud, and Makati's dynamic Mayor Jejomar Binay

THELMA Amyl, Marivic Nieto and Debora Cheng

JAYSON Khonghong, Kenneth and Jessica Palacios, with Jackie Ongchoco (standing)

BOOTS Anson Roa, Nicky and Bong Dee and popular PR man Dennis Ramirez

FACES Irlan, Maya-ann Montano Lagdameo Lopez, Dina Lorena, Anita Chan and Marsha's hotshot southerner Manolo Lopez

Man behind 'Faces Disco' makes a comeback

IF Who a smoking grand opening of Greenbelt 2's newest swinging baby, Mercu, a restaurant-bar-palengke?

I have rarely seen so opening party like it. The many guests literally spilled out into the streets. The service clearly followed that Subong Wins, the man behind the legendary Faces Disco, was right when he decided to make a comeback in the entertainment scene by opening a place that would bridge the preconceptions of the 80s and 90s and the present crop of hip children.

The less than Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay snipped the ceremonial ribbon, followed by the traditional blessing by Fr. Armand Tengi. All Anointing done now known. Phil commissioner Andy Salud, Subong V, and his fiancée Jaclene — Br. Ernie Baniles, Sonny Barrios, Bonnie Dingdiman, Carlos Ley and Benny Buhcanal.

In his brief speech, Binay jokingly said, "I hope that it will make a lot of money so that Makati can collect more taxes," which brought laughter and applause.

The smooth hostlers of Faces had the best party times of their lives with multi-talented DJ Rupert Almazan playing his extended 8-hours of 80s music.

Also, it certainly was turning back the hand of time for the grand old Faces days for 2000 or so partying personalities such as former Sen. Benny Osmeña, PR stars and columnist Bob Zaragoza, Bulgari's Mario Katigbak, fencing's Mel Mora, and popular comedienne Dr. Hamlly Francisco and his wife Irene Marcel, who was one of Faces' major stockholders and is now publisher of the popular Tatler magazine.

Also dancing were ageless Lou viscera Staffer Ruffino with his pal, architect Bobby Hermosa; Anthony Pangilinan; glam party girls Becky Garcia, Emma Zaldua, Gilli Ruth Campos, Joyce Yu, and Rachel Lobregat-Johnston who split up with DJ Manolet Ilarin for the second time around; Madam Rosario Maria Ferrer, Marivel Dario and Rosanna Escudero, plus the Galaxy Story of Manolet Lagdameo, Robert Young, Claudio Colmenares, BJ Lihon and Gilbert Teodoro.

Joining the fun were the regular night owls who had their own special launch by party organizers and super-creative events who, CF hears, live days here, palengke.

FREEZE! A one-gang of four: Bonnie Dingdiman, Subong Velez, Marizo Pudenzal and Carlos Ley

POPULAR couple Boy and Mesotto Guerrero

TV's glam gal Cox Delon with former Senator Sonny Osmeña

Photos by Alex Tan Hogen using Kodak EasyShare

The place was superbly decorated by multi-talented interior designer Anton Guevara, at no. of Pineapple. It has an awesome giant video wall and a multi-screen TV optimal between bars.

Sample Mercu's menu. The place specializes in small plate dining and full entrees, including classic low rollers from Subong's now defunct Spanish restaurant Doña Sony's, such as the Paella, which was passed around "Samurai" said everyone, earth.

But, palengke, with Mercu, it's party time with Subong again.

Italian hair care now here

Inspired by nature-saving philosophies, world renowned Swiss, environmental-inspired Italian hair care, color and styling line shortbread in 55 countries, was launched recently in Manila, palengke.

The Peninsula Manila Hotel's Conservatory was transformed into a sanctuary, with cool white silk cloth draping the high ceiling walls.

Relaxing sounds played the piano. The room was bedecked by healthy drinks and yummy low-calorie canapés. The lush garden salad buffet was definitely diet-friendly for dessert, there were fresh fruits, yogurt and cottage cheese.

Serigie Catrambone, Davines international sales manager, explained to the audience what Davines stands for.

Serigie JV's favorite products include the De-Stress blonde and Vegan shampoo and conditioner. He also treats me the Vegetarian Blonde and the Royal Jelly Hair Plus.

Davines couldn't have found a better styling space gal than the ultra-stylish designer, Rhudy Perkins-Tantoco, as less the trend-setting character and beautiful, hip style fit Davines perfectly.

Davines hired husband coordinator Brian Sabo emphasized "the importance of eating for health and the environment." Yes, palengke, it's still me. Mother Earth that holds the less luxury-enhancing canvas.

Call 9871116.

John Robert Powers is 28

The renowned John Robert Powers (JRP) Philippines is celebrating its 28th year as a personality development school.

Since opening in 1980, JRP has produced hot namedropables such as actor Sid Lucero, Karen Agustin, finishing Filipina Universe 2002 and second runner-up in the International Models and Talents Association Competition in New York; recording artist Sean Lim, Ginda Abanes, fourth runner-up in the Miss Earth Philippines pageant; Marivee Fabros, finishing Filipina 2005; Paolo Ballesteros, top TV personality; Francois Pil, actor, model of the first Modeling Agency in New York, Rita Avadis Bonnemaison, Angelica Jones; and that's just to name a few, palengke.

JRP's pitched of successful-looking locator co-founder John Robert Powers' philosophy beginning in 1923: "Be yourself, be natural, be the best you can be." With this in mind, long-time Manille resident, businessman Richard Upton, brought John Robert Powers to our shores.

During their latest "thanksgiving lunch" at JRP's new headquarters, at the Cuenco Building along Salcedo Street, Legaspi Village, former resident came in full chic force. It was great seeing Zaldilla Blasy Pilotin, her daughter, Marilou Prieto Lorenzo, Chuggi Martinez Pilotin, glam girl Vicky Yuchi's wife Joy pal, Nicky Tantoco, tall Gaste Aquino, chic Baby Fernando, Odessa Inciong, and Tessie Macasieb.

Today the JRP is headed by cyber-smart Marivic Padilla-Calada, who is the executive director of John Robert Powers business trend.

HOTSHOTS of personality development: JRP president Richard Upton (third from left) with Odon Avendaño, Tessie Macasieb and JRP head woman Marivic Padilla-Calada

SUCCESSFUL JRP graduates: Recording artist Sean Lim and Miss Abanes, fourth runner-up in the Miss Earth Philippines pageant

FORMER teachers of John Robert Powers: Chiqui Prieto, Lorie Aquino and May Prieto

THE ORIGINAL Faces owners Subong Velez, Philippine Tatler's Irene Marcel and husband, renowned cardiologist Dr. Randy Francisco

PEPPER Tantoco, Maribel's Christine San Diego, and her lover, good-looking Norman Brimmelhuis

DE-STRESS (clockwise) on the two hotcheks, Brian Sabo, Davines' last international educator coordinator, and Sergio Catrambone, mega-brand head sales manager

BAGHDAT Sabo's Stefan Wilczynski with the perfect representative for Davines, gorgeous Ayat Indra

HEY, you're looking good: CNN Inc.'s Olivia Wu (at with Boom Gonzales

GANG of us Islands: CNN Inc.'s Armand Velencia, with Kathy Lucero and Denise Co

A PLEASANT surprise. The young, enigmatic Nancy Castiglione, with her hair by Pio Antonio

A FAB Styling Space gal. Mindy Tantoco's hair was styled by Kemi Tam of Salon de Ham.

VIOLENT encounters can happen from behind...

...ESCAPE from various holds and positions.

Krav Maga to the rescue

What students learn is pure street-style self-defense where competition rules do not apply

From page C1

said Nir. Although Krav Maga is still used to train elite IDF soldiers and other military servicemen all over the world, many civilians have sought refuge in this practical self-defense trend.

"Military training has one purpose: To accost or kill the enemy. For civilians, the goal is different. They have to defend themselves and try to get away from the situation," says the Just Inquiro, the Finnish Krav Maga instructor in the Philippines.

Kenneth Amacchen, elder brother of the renowned Tachniston champs, the Stanislaw siblings, brought Krav Maga to the country. Aside from returning how to react to different situations, both domestic and his wife Marie discovered it was therapeutic when their eldest child sought medical treatment to the United States not long ago.

Tried and tested

Trained in having been armed in both street and battlefield, Krav Maga was borne out of the young Israeli Imi Lichtenfeld's need to defend himself to pro-World War II Bratislava, Slovakia.

Adhering the method for civilians are it more challenging than it seems. The military says forearms, is disciplined and obeys orders without asking questions.

"They will jump until you tell them to stop. Civilians think for half an hour and ask for the meaning of what they are doing before they begin to believe what you have to say," he says.

The behavioral differences demand more hand-varied from the trainees, but an even bigger disadvantage for civilians is not being alert enough. The military is trained to be prepared for an attack 24 hours a day; the civilian is not. Since awareness—whether they grab, choke or kick—often are the element of surprise, one of Krav Maga's goals is to sharpen a student's instincts for sniffing danger.

Beginners' classes grill students on the basics of punching, kicking and other forms of attacks, mainly to get the feel of the exercise and know when it might be like in a real-life sparring, says Inquiro.

Counterattack

Learning a countermeasure is important. Blocking an assailant's punches, for instance, won't make him stop. Answers says if his aim is to punch you he will continue to do so until he actually hits you. Only a strong counterattack can stop him.

"Countermoves are big, dramatic, attentive and rough on the edges. We have to train them to be less violent. Filipinos are sober and gentles. I think a more aggressive training should be applied," Inquiro says.

After the basics come lessons for self-defense—against kicks, punches, weapons such as knives or empty bottles, releasing one's body from grabs, etc. In short, everything that can possibly happen when under attack in the real world. Realistic scenarios and double defenses, whether one is a health-conscious gym rat or not.

There are sparring sessions, with bigger, trouble, older, younger, male and female partners—one on the defensive, the other the aggressor. Advanced training entails reinforcement sessions, taking classroom sessions to the street under real street lights, in the car parks, on dark alleys, recreational, etc.

Pure self-defense

There are no forms to learn, no kata to execute like in martial arts. What students learn is pure street-style self-defense where competition rules do not apply. Kick your assailant in the groin or use a chair to defend yourself if necessary. In fact, anything on sight, such as rocks or sticks, can become effective weapons when properly used. Simulating real life as much as possible, students also learn how to defend against two, three or four baggers.

When being attacked, for instance, the first thing to do is to get some air into the lungs before executing a counterattack and disengaging from the situation. Learn how to disentangle from different holds to various positions as well as outdo offensive moves that will bend their opponent to submission.

The main goal, says Inquiro, is to do whatever it takes to get home safely.

Krav Maga classes are offered at the 3/F Association Bachelors Center, 20 E. Medina corner F. Guerrero St., San Juan, Metro Manila (tel. 7249493, fax 7254943). Classes are currently held every Monday, Wednesday and Friday, at 5:30, 7 and 8:45 p.m.

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WHAT grabs can bend that aggressor into submission.

ATTACKS are countermeasures of all kinds of targets, elements, ranges, heights, angles, directions.

SASSA Activewear is made from fabrics that provide added flexibility for activities that call for stretches, swings and the like.

Sassy active wear

SASSA introduces its newest line of activewear that conveys the message that femininity and style need not be sacrificed for function.

The new Sassa Activewear line boasts of unique colors such as powdered glass blue and spring bouquet green in not only brighter, more look but help you stay cool. Light colors do not absorb as much heat as dark colors do during hot or humid days, keeping you fresh despite an active lifestyle.

Sassa Activewear is made from fabrics that provide added flexibility for those activities that call for stretches, swings, punches, jumps, high kicks and the like.

There is a Sassa Activewear boutique at the 2/L of Ali Mall, and at The Landmark, Robinsons Department Stores, Shoemart and Super SM department. Sassa Activewear is also available in all other major department stores nationwide.

For more information, visit www.fashionsfashion.com/sassa or e-mail sassa@fashionsfashion.com.

Fun run in Manila

THE WESTIN Philippine Plaza invites runners to its first Run-Westin Manila Fun Run on June 19. This is in line with its new global initiative, The Westin Workout.

The race will feature a challenging 5k and 10k open. The race is in partnership with the Sun and Computer Enterprise (SACE) and over 1,500 runners are expected to participate comprised of individuals, corporate running clubs and board members.

The race will start at 6 a.m. on the grounds of The Westin Philippine, stepping out on Roxas Boulevard/Buendia By every with the Coastal road as a turnaround point. Cash prizes and medals await the top 3 male and female winners in each category. Medals for the 4th-10th runners-up in each category will also be awarded.

Registration is ongoing at the G/F of Tempest Madrigal Plaza in Carmelita, San Juan, with a registration fee of P150. Interested parties may also register at The Westin Sports Club and Spa. Call 10 0555 loc. 1587 or 1588.

Best proven herbs, cosmetic surgery advice

IN THE LATEST issue of Healthy Options News Digest, the cover story features the 24 best (proven) herbal remedies. Among the effective herbs with their remedy are: aloe vera for burns, fenugreek for osteoporosis, feverfew for migraine prevention, cranberry for urinary tract infection, ginseng for erectile dysfunction, hawthorn for congestive heart failure and horse chestnut for varicose veins, whereas for snoozing.

On women's health, the issue on "Debunking Pap Smear Myths" will definitely enlighten female readers. The Pap smear is one of the most common routine medical tests that women get, yet persistent myths and misinformation still abound. Another interesting read is what every woman wants to know about colorectal cancer. After "Today" show was Katie Couric had the guts to undergo a televised colonoscopy giving millions of viewers a guided tour of "the huge intestine, the color of colon cancer visiting islands! 20 proven nationwide in the US.

A revealing topic for women, as well as for men, under "Oral Foods is the "Beauty Straws, When Cosmetic Surgery Goes Wrong." And here, don't our cosmetic procedures? Learn what goes wrong and how often.

"Kid's Nutrition" educates families on the do's on for different ages. A chart that provides adequate nutrition and is appropriate for a child's date of development. On the other hand, for Health's Fitness, "Aging Changes in the Bones, Muscles, Joints" to let yourself Know more about aging changes, effect of changes, 10 common problems and prevention.

Check out the latest Healthy Options News Digest's Brand Interest content of Health Options, the leading natural products store located at: Shangri-La Plaza Mall, Mandaluyong, Rustan's Supermarket, Makati, 2/L of Federal Supermall, Filinvest, Alabang; Ground Level of Ayala Center, Cebu City; 3rd level Floor of SM City North Edsa; 2/L of SM Manila, SM Pampanga, Greenhills, Ayala Center, Makati City; and 2/L of SM Megamall, B. Edsa Mandaluyong City.

The real meaning of fitness

Well and Good

Tina Anan

MANY people think that a lean and toned body is a sure sign of "being fit" but they are missing out on the real meaning of fitness. It's not surprising that this is the image that women in mind because those are the kinds of bodies that are used as ads for gyms or fitness equipment. Firm muscles and a lean body for percentages can be some of the signs of fitness, but you don't have to look like that to be fit.

So what does "being fit" really mean? This is an important question because people either try too hard to be in shape and injure themselves since they think they have to look a certain way or they don't even bother trying to get in shape since they believe they can never achieve that "look."

Definitions of fitness

Actually, being fit does not have much to do with how your body looks but has everything to do with how your body performs. Here are several definitions of fitness:

- "The ability to execute a given task effectively and safely" (Barry & Pollock, 4thEdition).
- "The capacity to achieve the optimal quality of life" (Fitness Leaders Handbook).
- "The condition resulting from a lifestyle that leads to the development of an optimal level of cardiovascular endurance, muscular strength and flexibility, as well as the achievement and maintenance of ideal body weight" (American Council on Exercise Personal Trainer Manual).

The 5-factors of fitness

I believe that a more complete definition comes from the book "Thyroidectomy" by Christopher Morris. He says being fit means having the "5-factors". Fitness supplement (flexibility), strength, speed (rate of movement and power), skill (athletic and motor), specificity (what you need to be fit for) and spirit (psychological aspect).

Functional fitness means having all these factors, at a level that is necessary for your lifestyle and goals. An Olympic-class athlete requires a different level of fitness compared to someone who only does a weekend sport.

No matter how sedentary your lifestyle you should have all the 5-factors (at a minimum level) so he/she is able to do routine activities of daily living without getting fatigued or injured.

You should also, at the very least, be fit enough to stay healthy and prevent lifestyle diseases like diabetes, hypertension, stroke and heart disease.

Health versus fitness

Good health and fitness do not always go together. As mentioned in a past issue, an individual can actually be fit and unhealthy.

A health is defined as the absence of disease and fitness is defined as the ability to do activities daily with vitality and alertness. It is possible for someone who lifts weights and has strong muscles to have clogged arteries. This could be due to bad genes, a poor diet, smoking or high stress levels.

Drug supplement and herbal abuse can also be the reason someone can be fit and unhealthy. This there are cases of superbly fit athletes dying all from an heart attack.

I remember a fitness instructor who was taking steroids and was constantly on a very high-protein diet to maximize her "six-pack" abdomen and has no stomach from body. She was always catching a cold and eventually caught pneumonia. Ironically, even though she was very fit, she was less healthy than her sedentary friends.

Generally speaking, however, fit people live longer than unfit people according to studies done by the Cooper Institute for Aerobic Research. Read researcher Stephen Blair found that physically fit men are 3.6 percent less at risk of premature death than sedentary ones while physically fit women are 4.9 percent less at risk of premature death than sedentary women.

How much fitness do you need to lower your risk of premature death? Blair's research found that for women, walking two miles in less than 30 minutes at least three days a week or walking two miles in 33.4 minutes five to six days a week. For men, walking two miles in less than 27 minutes at least three days a week or walking two miles in 30.48 minutes six to seven days a week.

How fit do you want to be?

You need to seriously ask yourself how fit you want to be because it will determine how much time and effort you need to put into your exercise program. In my opinion, fitness can mean at least health, fitness, aesthetics and sports performance.

Studies show that 30 minutes daily of any kind of physical activity including lifestyle activities like gardening and house cleaning seems to be the minimum requirement to maintain basic health.

For functional fitness (and average aesthetic results), a simple program can be 30 minutes of low to moderate cardiovascular exercise three times a week, 20 minutes of resistance training (an exercise is lifting weights) twice a week (one set of 12-15 repetitions), one exercise per body part) and stretching exercises three times a week (one stretch per body part held for 10-30 seconds).

To achieve the so-called "fit" look as well as higher levels of stamina, strength and flexibility, a typical program could look something like this: 45-60 minutes of moderate to high-intensity cardio exercise (walking, running, cycling, dancing) four to six times a week, one hour of resistance/flexibility training three times a week (weights, Pilates machines, yoga). Needless to say, proper nutrition is also very important.

Being fit for sports performance requires an exercise program made specifically for the sport's plus hours of practice. That's why athletes are considered the elite of the fitness world.

Visit www.topsportfitness.com

EXERCISE OF THE WEEK

Lateral stretch on stability ball

THIS exercise is to stretch the side of the torso.

Equipment:
Stability ball

Exercise instructions:

1. Start by kneeling down with the ball on your left side. Extend your right leg sideways. Slowly roll the ball to the left and lower your torso until your navel and hip are resting firmly against the ball.

2. Place your left hand on the floor. Then, carefully lower your upper body and take your right arm over your head.

3. Hold the stretch for the desired length of time.

4. To switch to the other side, place your right hand on the ball and lift your upper body. Then, place the left hand on the ball. Bend your extended right leg and roll yourself back into a kneeling position. Put the ball on your other side and repeat the instructions.

Performance tips:

1. For a more advanced version, straighten both legs (stop leg in front, bottom leg behind).

2. Keep neck and shoulders relaxed.

Repetitions:

Hold the stretch for 20-30 seconds.